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The Seven Deadly Sins of BMX XXX

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How many sins can you pack into one game? We examine.

By Hilary Goldstein

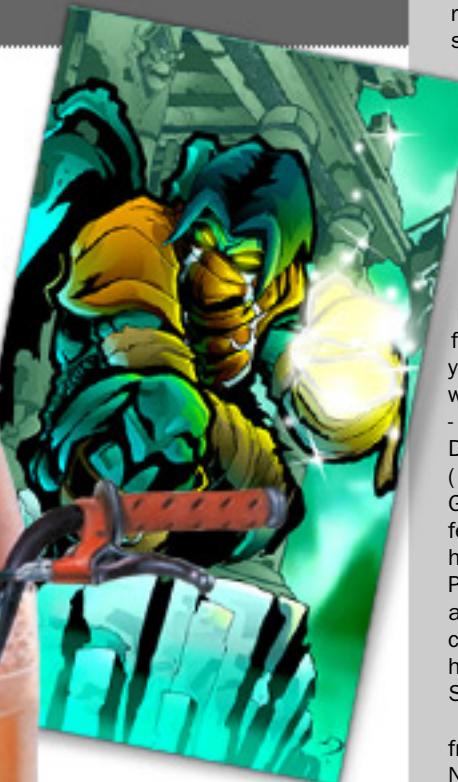


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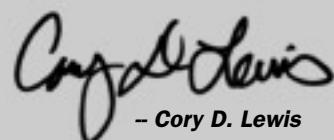
Here at IGN, we're always looking for a good reason to slap a scantily clad supermodel on the front cover of everything we do. So when our resident Xbox guru, Hilary Goldstein, had the chance to write this month's cover feature about Acclaim's newly released BMX XXX, we offered him our full support. "In order to write this feature, I'll need to stay up late into the night," Hilary said, "unlocking the many naughty FMV sequences within, and possibly staying home from work the next day due to...exhaustion." No problem, Hilary; thanks for taking one for the team.

So flip the page and check out Hilary's list of deadly BMX sins, and then keep on flipping to witness some of the downright wackiest IGN Unplugged features we've ever cooked-up. You'll see IGN Cube editors Matt Casamassina and Fran Mirabella rant and rave like underprivileged schoolgirls in one of the their daily

Instant Messenger chats – an IGN office favorite. The

FilmForce wizards have peered into their foggy crystal balls to take a glimpse at what the future should (and possibly could) hold for cartoon-to-film Hollywood projects. IGN Xbox intern Kaiser Hwang has taken a moment from his busy schedule of floggings and bricklaying to give you a behind-the-scenes peak at what it's really like to work at IGN – for free. And then, you've also got Dave Smith (IGN PS2), Dan Adams, (IGN PC) and Mike Wiley (IGN Gear) here to wrap things up with features targeted at informing your holiday-conscious spending efforts. Plus all the mail and nutty IGN pics and fan art and cookies that you can stuff in your cheeks – it's all here! Well, except for the cookies. Santa Tal ate those.

Have a Happy Holidays, gang, from everyone here at the IGN North Pole, and we'll see you in 2003!


– Cory D. Lewis



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inbox ::

Every month, we receive thousands of emails asking about everything from, "Why is Ivan always angry," to, "How do you see the naked chicks in *BMX XXX?*" While we can't print them all, we've chosen some of our favorites to show you here along with our highly entertaining responses. Enjoy!

email of the month ::

I want to know if the IGN site can send to me the best PC Games graphics in the section reviews to me. - **Diego**

PS2 ::

Fatal Flaw

Hi i am Kakarote989 i was wondering why you guys haven't been covering the new Dragon Ball Z game for the ps2. This game is going to be a top seller this holiday season and i haven't seen anything here for it yet!

- **gundam2002**

David Smith responds: There's one problem that will always afflict our DBZ coverage on IGN. Actually, it's more like three related facets of a problem. One, we loathe DBZ in all its forms. Two, we hate DBZ fans even more than we hate the cartoon/comic/merchandising phenomenon itself. Three, the game looks unbelievably bad. Thus, we hate to say it, but we will probably never be your best source of coverage for that particular game.

Rivalry

So many fighting games have been available for the PS2. From all your Guilty Gear Xes, Virtua Fighters, Tekken 4s, Capcom vs. SNKs, to Capcom vs. Marvels, the list goes on and on. Not to mention, we're still waiting for MK:Deadly Alliance and Soul Calibur 2 to be released. With that being said, is there any chance that Capcom will develop a Rival Schools game for the PlayStation 2 soon?

- **jfeagin**

David Smith responds: Our best reckoning is that the folks responsible for Rival Schools are currently working on Capcom

Fighting All-Stars, a System 246-based 3D fighter featuring characters from all over Capcom's past fighting games. It has some gameplay cues from the Rival Schools series, as well as a couple noteworthy characters - Akira and Batsu are both slated to appear. A straight Rival Schools sequel doesn't seem to be in the cards, though.

sells their eBooks. Then, they could use the money on a database and developing new games for the system instead of spending it on manufacturing costs. Also, the cards could be available to more people, so the people who don't live next to a Toys'R'Us can just download and print the cards.

- **Purrkat**

GBA ::

Canning of Karnaaj?

I was wondering if you heard anything new about Karnaaj?.... that weird named, but cool looking top down racing game. The preview you did a while back reminded me a lot of MicroMachines. So have you heard anything new about it?.... did it get canned? Thanks for your help and keep up the good work.

- **Dan Allison**

Craig responds: Karnaaj actually has a home! The impressive top down racer for the Game Boy Advance was recently picked up for publishing by Jaleco as one of their first games under the new company's brand. It's a shame that name stuck, though...it's kind of clever, but in the same sense, it's not a very good name for a racing game.

Interesting E-card Idea

I think it would be cool if Nintendo created a webpage where a person could go online and print out their own e-reader cards (for a price, of course). They could use a similar purchasing system to how Amazon

Craig responds: The problem is, the cards require a seriously detailed printer to print out the fine assortment of dots of a Dot Code strip on an e-Reader card. Not a whole lot of people have that sort of equipment, so it'd be kind of pointless to offer that service. And to be honest, it doesn't really cost Nintendo a whole lot of cash to manufacture and distribute those cards, what with their partnership with Wizards of the Coast and all.

XBOX ::

Stay Down Fool

One thing I notice in the movies is that when a fighter gets knocked down, the ref will start the count. However, the ref stops counting as soon as the knocked down fighter starts moving to get up. An example is the Rocky 1 vs. Apollo 2 movie. If the count would continue like it should Rocky would have won by KO. Is this going to be fixed? Thanks.

- **Randy**

Aaron responds: The movie you're referring to was a specially edited

and produced piece by the folks at Ubi Soft, meant to illustrate the similarities between the game and films. But if you must have an answer to your question, then I'll say no, it isn't going to be fixed, because in videogames, knockdown sequences and recovery time are usually afterthoughts. But Rocky sure is fun.

PC ::

Finishing up Freespace

Somehow, I knew. But I figured I ought to ask anyway. Besides, I'm sure other people would want to know as well...

I guess the thing that really gets me about it is how the plot is just left wide open at the end of FS2. What happened to Earth? What are the Shivan doing in the what's-it-called system? Etc...

- Matt

Ivan responds: Freespace 2 was intentionally left wide open much like the original Freespace was (except in a much grander and arguably less epic kind of way). The initial goal of Volition was to create a third game in the series that would wrap-up most loose ends but then still create new ones of its own. Originally that game would have portrayed the Shivan as being a minuscule threat compared to something much, much larger. This, despite the fact that Freespace and FS2 made them out to be an unstoppable legion of galaxy conquering fools.

It works if you really think about it. According to the Ancients, the Shivan were protecting subspace - a sort of universal guardian that dispatched audacious lesser races who dared intrude into the vast uncharted domains, assaulting technologically backwards species they presumably controlled or watched over.

There has always been much speculation as to what they are exactly, but assumingly the Shivan are a sort of intelligent, biomechanical race birthed from space itself, and organized into a hive like hierachal structure whose head remains unseen. Bosch's goal

was to contact them and reveal the greater ominous threat he believed to exist. He called it the ETAC project. The looming doom is why he thought the Shivan to be a potential and necessary ally against whatever evil lurked outside the narrow vision of man. To him, communication and cooperation with the Shivan was the only way to go about in preserving the Terran race. The Neo Terran Front (his version of Hitler's youth) was always, appropriately enough, a front he used to bring the ETAC project to fruition. The truth of the matter is that we'll never know what happened to Admiral Bosch, his ETAC project, whether or not Earth was ever revisited, what happened after the pullout at Capella, or even whether or not the Vasudan/Earth alliance remains strong.

Have Bosch and his entire crew really been captured and murdered by the Shivan as the survivors on his vessel attested to? We know they sent the signal to talk and even met up with several Shivan frigates, but what then? Why did the Shivan destroy an entire star system at the expense of many of their own lives? Was it really an attempt at genocide or was it to prevent us from further using the Ancient jumpgate and venturing deep into the unknown?

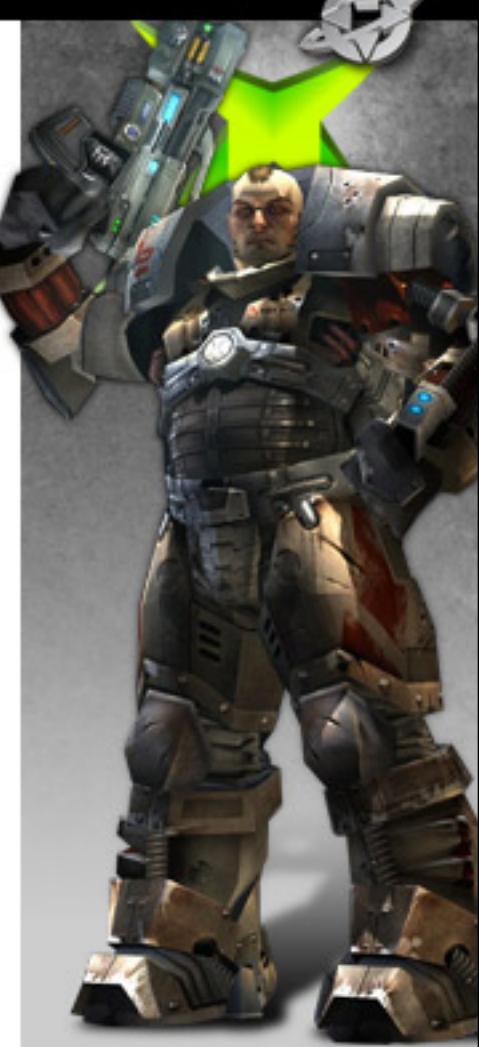
Protectors, great destroyers, mindless drones, or sinister evil, we'll probably never know. It's a grave shame. Even though there were just two titles, the Freespace series remains one of my most cherished possessions in all of gaming.

But don't feel too bad. Not even Volition knew where the story would end. Since production on the third game never really swung into full gear, the Champaign boys were not allowed the time required to fully develop the storyline. It's like the final episode of Voltron that ended on a cliffhanger just before the ultimate showdown between good and evil. What a bummer.

Delving into Descent

So then if Freespace 3 isn't likely anytime soon (so very, very sad), whatever happened to Descent 4?

- Matt ▶



XBOX ::

To Shoot or Not to Shoot

I'm a multi-player FPS fan with no intention of getting Xbox Live. Should I purchase TS2 or Unreal Championship as a means to frag my friends? - Greg

Aaron responds: Wow, that's a tough choice, but if you're already deciding to skip the Xbox Live, then there's no point in picking up Unreal Championship - a game that's designed from top to bottom to work online. Battling against three of your buddies is always fun, but there's more talent out there online.



GameCube :: Zelda Music

Is the music in Zelda going to be orchestrated? If so, by whom?

- **Olimario**

Fran responds: All the music we've heard thus far is MIDI. It's all real-time interactive, which would be quite impossible with orchestrated music. I just heard the Super Smash Bros. orchestrated concert, and it's very moving. It makes me think that sacrificing real-time audio cues at some points is worth the quality and intensity of symphony music.

Ivan responds: Even though the first Freespace was dubbed *Descent: Freespace -The Great War* (in North America), it was never truly part of the *Descent* franchise or fiction. The game was to be called simply *Freespace*, or *Freespace: The Great War*, but due to copyright infringement, Volition had to add the *Descent* prefix. I believe, among other things, "*Freespace*" is also a software program designed to compress and free up storage on one's hard disk drive.

On to Descent...

A long, long time ago in a state far, far away there existed a supremely talented development house we mere mortals knew as *Parallax*. This company is the one responsible for the original *Descent* and *Descent II*, among other things. Prior to *Descent 3*, *Parallax* split to form *Outrage* and *Volition*, cooperative sister companies that still share internal documents, chat groups, and close ties with one another (they are not competitors, but rather friends).

Outrage went on to develop *Descent 3*, *Mercenary*, and are currently embroiled in PS2 development. *Volition* of course created *Freespace*, *Silent Threat*, and *Freespace 2*.

After *Freespace 2* and around the same time *Summoner* was being worked on, *Volition* was indeed heavily involved in *Descent 4* development. As it turned out. This was to be no normal *Descent*. The game was being seriously retooled and redesigned. Initial design docs included an exo suit like vehicle, on-foot action, and an early version of *Volition*'s acclaimed *Geo-Mod* technology.

As you can see, things were drastically changing. Through development, *Descent 4* steadily drifted further and further away from its heritage. That's when *Red Faction* was born. Behind the scenes reasons amplified the need for change (a progressively worsening relationship with a dying *Interplay* and so forth).

The now radically different *Descent* premise was revised and

rewritten to become *Red Faction*. Some people still mistakenly refer to *RF* as *Descent 4*, or what *Descent 4* would have been anyway had development continued, but that's a totally erroneous belief. The games are very, very different. One died and another was born. The confusion comes from the fact that this all happened inside the hallowed halls of a single development studio.

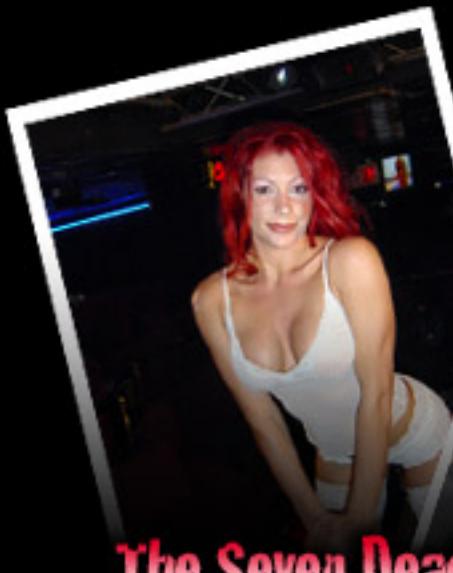
Descent 4 no longer exists. Neither *Outrage* nor *Volition* will ever develop it in the foreseeable future. The *Titus* corrupted *Interplay* will likely never pick it up either. Again, what a bummer.

GCN :: Big Three

Now that Nintendo's plans for the Big Three are upon us, what should we be looking out for this spring, both from other major franchises and original titles?

- **Fiddleus**

Fran responds: I'm assuming you mean *Mario*, *Metroid*, and the intended February release of *Zelda*. After those, Nintendo is being particularly secretive. All it has said was that 2003 is the year it will prove itself to be innovative. I imagine it wants to introduce a lot more ideas like it has with *Pikmin*, for example. However, it also has huge titles like *Star Fox Armada*, *F-Zero GC*, *Resident Evil 4*, *Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles*, and I imagine *Pokémon* has to come out finally. Next year will be bigger than you think. The company will probably introduce an online product. We've all been dreaming of *Mario Kart* online. Maybe it will happen, but even if it doesn't there should be something. Don't forget that *Sonic Team* could very well be conjuring up another *Sonic* title, too. There's a lot going on right now, but I think we're going to have to wait until E3 to hear about a lot of it. I actually don't expect spring 2003 to be too busy, but the end of the year will be. ■



The Seven Deadly Sins of **BMX XXX**

How many sins can you pack into one game? We examine.

by Hilary Goldstein

Z-Axis bids farewell to their former partners with their final Acclaim title, *BMX XXX*. A down and a dirty, no-holds barred, naughty-as-can-be video game, *BMX XXX* takes the sport of BMX and pulls its pants down. Filled with bodacious tatas, gnarly grinds, potty humor, and more naked strippers than you can shake your stick at, *BMX XXX* is easily the most adult-oriented console game released in America to date.

Acclaim is hoping that the vast male video game audience will shell out big cash to see girls going wild in a video game. And while *BMX XXX* maintains the overall functionality of an extreme sports game, its sinful nature is evident in every frame. There are pimps looking for their hoes, monkeys in need of rescue, and world-famous strip bar Scores, where you can take the coins you collect throughout each level and pay to see real gets get real nekid.

Sounds fun right? Well hold on there, cowboy, because all sins come at a cost. Sure, it'd be fine if a game only brought one or two sins into your life, but *BMX XXX* hits you with all seven deadly sins. What are these sins, how do they show up in the game, and what affect might they have on your life? To spare your soul, IGN examines...

The Seven Deadly Sins of BMX XXX

What are the Seven Deadly Sins? Good question. While there are seven holy virtues, in which to live your life by, there are also seven capital sins for which your immortal soul will suffer an eternity in Hell. Each sin comes with its own unique punishment, so living with all seven is gonna make for a hot time in the netherworld when you shuffle off your mortal coil.

Envy, sloth, gluttony, wrath, pride, greed, and lust comprise these seven mortal sins. We'll examine each in hopes it saves your from an afterlife filled with torment. Though, if you really want to enjoy life while you live it, you may wanna accept some of these sins. It's your soul and your choice. We're just your friendly guide telling you how horridly tortured your soul is about to become.

envy

A resent for the good others receive. It's a desire for another's possessions, talents, looks, social status, abilities or genitalia size.

Represented by: The dog and the color green.

Virtue it opposes: Love

Punishment in Hell: You'll be placed in freezing water.

Envy in BMX XXX

You want the crazy skills to be the best BMXer in the world. Mainly because you think it will get you laid (see *lust*). But the other bikers are better than you and you know it. Envious of the various bikers hanging out in each level, you do your best to prove yourself to them. "Look at me," you say, trying to bust out some ridiculous trick with a poodle clinging desperately to the back of your bike, "I'm good!" But, as is always the case with envy, it's never good enough. Pull off all the tricks you want, get kudos from as many BMXers as you can, but there's always another one out there better than you. Perhaps you could pay some unemployed fat guy to go whack a knee with a tire iron. It's worked in the past, hasn't it?

Envy in your life

Worst case scenario: You have no cash (you are too young to work, unemployed, lazy, or a heroin addict) and *BMX XXX* has just leaped onto store shelves. Your buddy, however, has oodles of cash. You come over, watch him play. You take the controls for a bit and enjoy yourself. The land tricks are the kind of dope kids like to smoke, you realize. And hey, it's got girls in it – naked girls! But, you can't have it for yourself. You can't take it home and lock yourself away with the game, secluded from the world, because it's not yours. It belongs to your buddy. Oh, the rich one. The one with a "job." Always flaunting the fact that he's not a loser like you. You turn green with envy now, but in Hell you'll turn blue from the chill of freezing water. Brrrr. (Note: To avoid this situation, get a job you lazy bastard!)

sloth

Avoidance of physical or spiritual work, Sloth keeps you from being spiritually centered. Laziness.

Represented by:

The goat and the color blue

Virtue it opposes: Zeal

Punishment in Hell:

Thrown into a pit of snakes.

Sloth in BMX XXX

There's no one instance of sloth to point out in *BMX XXX*. Instead, the entire game can be pointed to. You ride around each level, talking to people who ask for your help. You do tasks for them while they sit on their lazy asses doodling (or whatever it is they do). All of these NPCs represent sloth, because

Gluttony in BMX XXX

A staple of video games is collecting. Grab coins or stars or pizza boxes – whatever it is, get 'em all. How much is enough? Oh, it's never enough. Even when you have everything, you want another. *BMX XXX* is no stranger to this phenomenon. Sure, we all think of gluttony as gorging yourself on food, but collecting bananas, 40s, and coins in various levels is no different. Fatten yourself up on your collection, but it's never gonna be enough. Consume all in one level, there's gonna be another level waiting for more. Of course, the bonus in collecting in *BMX XXX* is that you get to see girls stripping. I'm not sure collecting a bunch of bananas figures into that, but hey, I'm always willing to try something once.

Gluttony in your life

You've seen your average gamer? 'Nuff said.

wrath

Anger, rage, and revenge. The spurning of love in favor of fury.

Represented by: The bear and the color red.

Virtue it opposes: Kindness

Punishment in Hell: Dismembered alive.

Wrath in BMX XXX

Wrath is often the end product of one or more other sins. You usually don't just start off all pissed off. I mean, if we learned anything from *Se7en* (you did learn something from *Se7en*, didn't you?) it's that all roads lead to vengeance.

And so it is with *BMX XXX*.



they can't do anything for themselves. "Go free these monkeys," "Hey, you, let me see you do this trick," "Oh, I need to get these dogs to stop pooping everywhere, you do it." It's a non-stop sloth-fest making every NPC in *BMX XXX* worthy of a trip to that hot place just below the Florida Keys.

Sloth in your life

When not reading this article, you'll be busy playing *BMX XXX*. Sitting on your couch, controller in hand, line of drool running down your mouth. Yeah, nice going ya lump. Be warned, playing *BMX XXX* will consume your time as you'll want to beat it, help everyone, see all the naked chicks. Problem is, you'll be making a nice indentation in your couch while doing it. Get off your butt and walk around the block already, before Satan himself comes ringing your doorbell.

gluttony

The desire to consume more than what's required. Not just food, gluttony can also involve entertainment and the company of others.

Represented by: The pig and the color orange.

Virtue it opposes: Temperance

Punishment in Hell:

Force-fed rats, snakes, and toads. Ewww.

Envious of his fellow hot dog vendors' success, wanting all the weiner cash flow for himself, and needing to feel that he's the best on the block, one vendor orders you to destroy all others. You are the tool for his wrath, ramming your bike into other carts, ruining others dreams. It's fun! Of course, eventually you and the weiner-man will be in Hell together, slowing being dismembered, but hey, it's not like they're gonna grind you up and make you into hot dogs, right?

Wrath in your life

"Dammit! Dammit! Dammit!" Welcome to your world as you do your best to complete some of the tougher tasks in *BMX XXX*. "Craptastic!" You shout as you bail once again, your biker more resembling road pizza than a BMX champ. This frustration, coupled with your wife's pestering questions about why you needed to take so much tissue with you to the den just to play some stupid game, will lead to anger. Anger leads to the dark path (and dismemberment). Just look at what happened to Luke Skywalker. He got pissed when he found out his dad was some kinky dude dressed in full bondage get-up and he lost a hand. And his dad, well way back in the day he lost an arm because he was all kinds of pissed off because some girl wouldn't let him get the boogie. Not only did these events lead to strange fetishes (one made out with his sister, the other went down to the Sado-Masochist Emporium and bought a new Saturday night "costume"), but it also leads them straight to Hell. A Hell filled with Ewoks. Do you really want that? No, no you don't.

pride

An excessive belief in your own abilities.
Considered the sin that breeds all other sin.

Represented by: The horse and the color violet.

Virtue it opposes: Humility

Punishment in Hell: You'll be broken on the wheel.

Pride in BMX XXX

Vanity – a word synonymous with *pimp*. At least it is in the world of *BMX XXX*. When a purple-clad trafficker of women finds his beautiful lavender Cadillac is being repeatedly pelted by birds chillin' on a telephone wire, it's up to you to shoo them away. This is a special favor to store owner Lon Hung Kok, who is sick of hearing the pimp bitching. You've got to get on the wires and chase off the birds, because it's shameful to be seen in a Caddy decaled

in bird crap. The pimp's pride, however, means he has to harm others (the widdle pigeons... awww). As you can see, one sin leads to another. Pride forces wrath. It's a never-ending cycle. So, sure, spare the pimp's car from the foul fecal rain, but that won't save his soul. But hey, at least his car will look pimp-ass again!

Pride in your life

So happy that you managed to sneak a copy of *BMX XXX* out of the store, despite the fact that you're not even in junior high yet, you begin flashing it in your buddies' face. "Look what I got!" "Mine!" "I'm da bomb diggity." See, pride will make you say words like this. And then, showing off your mad skills (which earn you the right to see naked women), you'll taunt your friends, boasting at your greatness. That's all well and dandy, but moms have ears, and yours will be sure to find out thanks to your inability to be humble, to chill, to watch naked women without a hoot or a hollar. And this, my friend, will get you in deeper doo than any punishment the Devil springs on you in Hell.

greed

Wanting to get your fair share and more.
Not just about money, greed is about the need to have it all.

Represented by: The frog and the color yellow.

Virtue it opposes: Charity

Punishment in Hell: Boiled in oil.

Greed in BMX XXX

Pulling off crazy trick combos is the only way to fatten your score. But to do that, you've gotta take risks. Yeah, you could play it safe and stick with that four-trick combo, but who wants to play things safe? No, instead you'll go for five and then six and then seven. You'll try and bust three land tricks, then trick off a half-pipe and try to land on a rail for a series of gravity-defying grinds. But more often than not, you'll pull one trick too many and end up eating gravel. Greed – the desire for that one extra trick. But one more is never, ever enough.

Greed in your life

It's one thing to bail in a game, but another more painful thing to do so in real life. Though we've already

established you'll be spending all your days and nights playing *BMX XXX*, there may come a time you actually need to go out to 7-11 for some HoHos. It's at this point that greed will overcome you. Take your bike, and you may find yourself trying to imitate the game you love so much, but that third trick, the 360 Superman, gets you crashed, your good and plenties crushed against the handlebar as you tumble over your bike, bouncing along the pavement and coming to a stop when your hard head meets the even harder curb. Oh, and then you'll go to Hell.

needed to be warned. Play, and you will set yourself on a sure road to Hell. But, then again, you will get to see some gyrating girls flashing their tatas. All in all, not a bad deal. I mean, Hell can't be all that awful, right?

- Hilary Goldstein ■

Lust

The desire for pleasures beyond normal means.

Represented by: The cow and the color blue.

Virtue it opposes: Self-control

Punishment in Hell: Smothered in fire and brimstone.

Lust in BMX XXX

If you're gonna sin, it might as well be a good one. It's no secret that the overriding goal in *BMX XXX* is to earn enough coin to go to Scores and see half-dressed women get even more nekid. To further tempt your soul towards damnation, these women are quite hot. Sure, those may be fake breasts, but boy are they big. Watch, marvel, drool, and get out a hankie as these women dance, grind, and get naughty all by themselves. It'll have you comin' back for more.

Lust in your life

Apparently these "strip clubs" in *BMX XXX* are based on something in our real world. Who knew there were places where you could pay to see women undress? Now that you know, you may end up going to one of these pits of ill repute. Certainly you'll be having naughty dreams about the women in the video. Heck, you may even cause yourself to go blind. Even blind, you'll still be able to imagine those sweet, sexy working girls jiggling their jugs. Hope there are dreams in Hell, because that's where you'll be head... and I'll be there waiting for you.

There you have the seven deadly sins of *BMX XXX*. We're not suggesting you avoid the game, but we felt you



**castaway_fran**

Sick with disgust for his IGN Cube cohort, Fran recently decided to take an extended vacation as a castaway on deserted island somewhere in the Pacific. Matt was equally delighted.

**around the office ::**

The IGN offices are a safe, productive work environment – that's what we'd like you to believe, anyway. But in this monthly feature will give you an true behind-the-scenes look at what it's really like to work for IGN: the booze, the parties, the women, and the small army of baby pandas. It's all here in these revealing photos. Viewer discretion is advised.

the_artistic_tenenmaums

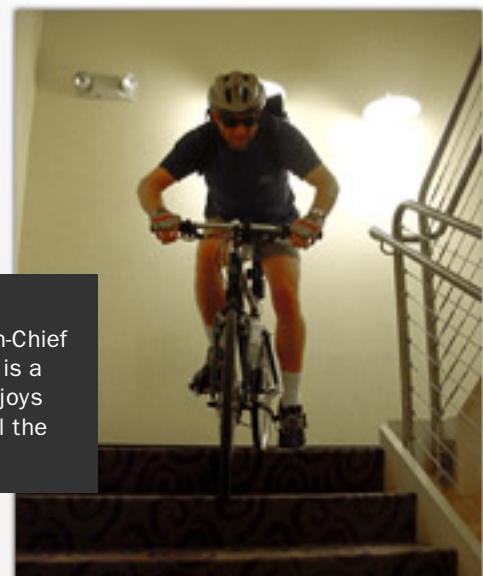
These two members of the IGN Design Team are perhaps better known for their portrayals of dysfunctional family members in The Royal Tenenbaums. Go, Mordicai!

**sickos**

They may try to claim "Halloween," but everyone around the office knows that Chris Carle and Tal Blevins are really just secretly infatuated with each other – in the strangest of ways.

**doug_is_crazy**

IGN PS2's Editor-in-Chief Douglass C. Perry is a fitness nut. He enjoys biking to work. All the way to work.





FRAN MIRABELLA III

EDITOR INFO ::**Publisher**

Fight Club

Developer

Soap

Genre

Storm Chaser

Peripherals

- Samus-mobile
- Monkey Ball key chain

Extras

- Hyperactivity
- Dislike for Matt Casamassina

OFFICE ABUSE ::

Looking into the mirror in total darkness and saying, "No more Unplugged," three times hasn't produced any results.

MOST WANTED ::

1. Metroid Prime
2. Metroid Fusion
3. Resident Evil 0
4. Zelda: Wand of the Wind
5. Samus Aran's phone number

For GCN news, reviews, previews, and more, visit:
<http://cube.ign.com>

FRAN MIRABELLA III
EDITOR LETTER ::

10.27.02 - Last month, Matt kicked off our new feature-oriented Unplugged by editorializing on what he would do in Nintendo's place now that Rare is gone. Sure, it may have sounded well thought out or even intelligent, but the truth be told, those random thoughts were transcriptions from the "communication sessions" Matt had while he was in the asylum. You see, after Rare left for Microsoft, Matt's little brain couldn't take it. He went off the deep end. It wasn't long before we found him in a Conker-worthy state, frothing at the mouth, muttering about revenge on Nintendo. After some serious detox, buckets of medication, and the opportunity to deal with reality, he was released – a most unfortunate event for yours truly.

However, it has its benefits. This month I figured another "communication session" would be in order. In the following GameCube feature, Matt and I hop on to our Instant Messaging service and rant about various topics. It's a very kickback style conversation, and, because we're both incredibly lazy, combined with our common dislike for Unplugged (shh! Don't tell Cory, you'll break his heart), we've convinced ourselves you'll like it. Enjoy!

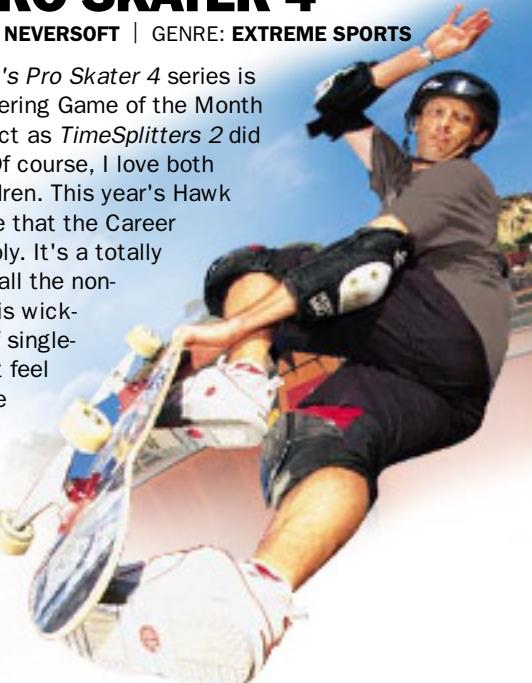
**GAME OF THE MONTH ::**

It should be no surprise that some remaining members of the *GoldenEye 007* and *Perfect Dark* teams have crafted a polished first-person shooter that is heavily backed by a brilliantly addictive multiplayer mode. It's a healthy dose of that good-ol' *GE007* feeling that we all miss so much, which is what makes it IGNcube's game of the month.

WHAT THE EDITORS ARE PLAYING ::**TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4**

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION | DEVELOPER: NEVERSOFT | GENRE: EXTREME SPORTS

The latest addition to the *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* 4 series is the best yet, and it only missed garnering Game of the Month because it didn't have as much impact as *TimeSplitters 2* did in terms of newness to GameCube. Of course, I love both games equally – like I would my children. This year's Hawk was surprising, however, in the sense that the Career Mode has been beefed up considerably. It's a totally different format and the inclusion of all the non-traditional skateboarding objectives is wickedly entertaining. So, there's a lot of single-player value for me there now. I don't feel like I'm just unlocking levels to skate the new lines and create different combos. That's only part of it. The other drive that pulls me forward is just to experience the different objectives and explore the huge levels without the hurdles of the former two-minute timer. *THPS4* is just as addictive as the last. I don't know when I'll put it down.





ICQube: VOLUME ONE

Getting Started...



MattCubist: Cory said we have to get Unplugged finished last night.

MattCubist: We had better think of a feature idea.

FranPrime4: Indeed.

MattCubist: How's about we just talk to each other about various subjects in AIM. This way I don't have to look at you or interact with you directly, and yet work still gets done.

MattCubist: Everybody's happy.

FranPrime4: That's the brightest idea you've ever had. The feeling is entirely mutual.

FranPrime4: Wait, strike that.

FranPrime4: That's the only idea you've ever had, I'm quite sure.

MattCubist: Shut it! 

MattCubist: So...

MattCubist: I guess we'll need a first subject. Cube Clubs, you think? Seems a timely enough news piece.

FranPrime4: Fair enough, though I know I have plenty more issues to complain about regarding Nintendo. Err...discuss, I mean.

MattCubist: Uh-huh. Makes two of us, but we may as well start somewhere.

...Get Clubbed or Get Out

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VOLUME

...Get Clubbed or Get Out...



MattCubist: On Cube Clubs: They seem pretty cool so far. On the one hand, I still like the hip environments, meaning the DJs, the lights, the music, the kiosk setup, and the deals with various vendors like Snapple.

MattCubist: And yet...

MattCubist: The games. Most of them are decidedly old. Nintendo brings out the E3 2002 version of Metroid Prime for Cube Clubs – and just weeks before the game is going to launch? Huh? That's a pretty dumb move, don't you think? Why all the secrecy?

FranPrime4: I think it's reasoning was a result of pure laziness and also their perception of the potential attendees. After all, it's not like they've played these titles before. Many of them have only dreamed about it.

FranPrime4: But, you're right. It's hardly excusable. The E3 2002 demo of Legend of Zelda lacks polish and that's not exactly the best way to show off your biggest upcoming title. If anything, the secrecy comes from Nintendo of Japan and the lack of will to really do anything about it comes from NOA.

MattCubist: Yeah, well. I'm convinced now that NCL is out of touch. Seriously out of touch. No, mind-bogglingly out of touch.

FranPrime4: Hah. That's a fair assumption that I'd agree with.

MattCubist: For sure, have you even seen a single magazine cover of Metroid Prime? This is because the press wasn't given much access to the game. No access equals inadequate coverage. So even when Nintendo has a brilliant product, it finds a way to not let the world know about it.

MattCubist: By the way, I've totally moved the topic from Cube Clubs to general venting, but that's just how it goes.

MattCubist: [Grabbing Coke.]

MattCubist: [Err. Grabbing Pepsi. Coke is ass.]

FranPrime4: Yea, no kidding. It's a bit hard to believe that it really hasn't gotten a single cover yet. Then again, Nintendo really hasn't let the media play the game. The E3 demo was the only thing we got to play hands-on, and in August 2002 the company merely let us watch them demo four levels. It was perfectly stable, but for some reason Nintendo said, "No, we will not allow you to experience it." Very lame.

MattCubist: It's truly baffling.

MattCubist: "Hey, hey – we got four awesome new levels for you to check out. But guess what? You can't play them! Surprised?"

FranPrime4: Coke and Pepsi are both generic and arse. They're like Budweiser or Miller are to beer. Get yourself a Sam Adams and be a real man.

...Get Clubbed or Get Out (continued)



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ICQube: VOLUME ONE

...Get Clubbed or Get Out...



MattCubist: Whatever, pansy girl.

MattCubist: This Pepsi is soothing and delicious, I'll have you know. Sam Adams? Is that imported from Russia? You Commie.

FranPrime4: Anyhow, back to the topic at hand – Cube Clubs. I do think they're a great idea, and, honestly, we're just being overly critical for the sake of being so frustrated as members of the press. I think Nintendo should keep doing Cube Clubs, though. They're awesome.

MattCubist: Yeah.

...Attention Needed...



...Attention Needed...

talk

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MattCubist: When is October Unplugged coming out?

Monkey7-IGN: Sometime before Thanks

Monkey7-IGN: Maybe if you guys were to bring on schedule, it'd see the light on time.

FranPrime4: However, I think Nintendo overlooks the bigger issues. For instance, while at the mall today do you remember what Electronics Boutique looked like as we entered it?

MattCubist: You bet. "X-lectronics Box-tique" you mean?

FranPrime4: Yea, the first thing I said to you and Peer when I walked in was, "Hey, do they sell that Xbox thing here?"

MattCubist: Uh-huh. It's sickening. The entire damn store is filled with X-wares and one would be hard-pressed to find a GCN display anywhere about. It's this kind of crap that is selling Microsoft's console in the US. Nintendo needs to realize that. Seriously – Nintendo can paint kids across the U.S, Pikmin colors and make giant bowls of pasta for people to jump in – and not a single GCN will be bought because of it.

MattCubist: Get in the retailers!

MattCubist: Shove that damn console down the consumer's throat.

FranPrime4: [Time for that Sam Adams.]

MattCubist: Uh-huh. Why don't you just grab some vodka and destroy a space station while you're at it, Stalin.

MattCubist: Hey – off topic, for about the 100th time in this "feature" – when do you think this article will actually be published? For the information of readers, it's late October now. I'll bet this baby goes live December 2007.

FranPrime4: Whatever you say Kool-Aid Man. Haven't you broke through enough walls this week? Lay off the sugar and get yourself some good hops.

MattCubist: It's called alcoholism. The first step in treatment is recognition.

FranPrime4: Shut that sugar-frosted mouth of yours! I can barely stand another word.

FranPrime4: But seriously, though, Nintendo has really failed to take hold of consumer attention en masse. We knew Sony would score big with the PlayStation 2 and I was always pretty convinced that Microsoft could make a

...Attention Needed (continued)



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ICQube: VOLUME ONE

...Attention Needed...



dent, but I never thought it would come to this. Nintendo releases Super Mario Sunshine and Xbox still sells more hardware in the US! Somehow, Nintendo is finding itself in a very awkward position. No longer is "Nintendo" a good replacement for the word "videogames." Neither has "GameCube" become that kind of word. Not really. Instead, "PlayStation 2" and "Xbox" are the standard buzzwords to use when speaking about videogames.

MattCubist: It's funny, too. Nintendo has an image problem. It's catered itself to the "family demographic" for so long that it's practically ruined its own brand. Sony has proven being hip and edgy is overwhelmingly "in." Microsoft has followed suit. Meanwhile Nintendo is perceived as the kid's company. That wouldn't be a problem except – oops, kids don't want to be kids. They want to be hip and edgy. And parents are all too happy to oblige them.

MattCubist: So now Nintendo is sending out press releases that state: "Hey, we have mature games, too." The problem is, nobody seems to be listening, or perhaps gamers just don't believe the, or maybe Sony and Microsoft just have more. I don't know. My head hurts just thinking about it.

MattCubist: It's amazing, though, that Nintendo let Sony come in and take market lead, then it let Microsoft come in and steal the second spot in the US, and still NCL pretends that it has some idea of what the market wants. Give me a break. It's totally clueless.

FranPrime4: Exactly. Nintendo seems to sort of be going against the grain of itself. It wants to be that "Everybody" company, but instead it has really cornered itself in the market. It chose not to be a part of the whole DVD-meets-gaming market, and I think that was very wounding to them, for one. But, its whole front is completely unorthodox. It really does have mature games now, but the fact that they have to announce them means there's a bigger underlying problem. Sony and Microsoft do not have to announce that they have mature games. There's no question.

MattCubist: Uh-huh. And as a result it looks like Nintendo is trying too hard to be cool, which is about the uncoolest thing possible.

MattCubist: It reminds me of you, actually.

FranPrime4: If we're making videogame company analogies here, I would surmise you to be something like 3DO, a complete mistake from the beginning that has somehow survived on selling really bad ideas. But soon you will fade away, and then we can all breath more easily.

FranPrime4: That's my dream anyway.

MattCubist: I'm not going to dignify that comment.

FranPrime4: Hopefully 3DO doesn't either.

MattCubist: [Cue band music: ba-da-bing, ba-da-boom]

...Jim Merrick Watch...



...Jim Merrick Watch...

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MattCubist: So, do you know if Jim Merrick is still alive?

FranPrime4: Hah. It's hard to tell these days. He still hasn't ever given us a clear description of his current duties at Nintendo, and if they do indeed have something to do with the online plan, perhaps he isn't alive. That would explain Nintendo's lackluster involvement in the online market.

FranPrime4: By the way, I just realized that as we're now wrapping up this feature at work, I have no Sam Adams.

MattCubist: I asked my broadband adapter if it knew Merrick and it wouldn't respond to my questions. I'm at my journalistic ends. To its credit, though, Nintendo has repeatedly said it has a deep online strategy ("we

could launch with online games right now if we wanted to"), but that it's not ready to divulge it. Perhaps Merrick is the hardest working, top-secret engineer agent this side of 007. Except we'll never know it.

FranPrime4: Yes, the plan is so top secret that even Jim Merrick doesn't know about it.

MattCubist: I'm guessing that Nintendo will unveil Mario Kart online at next year's E3, will announce an online version of Animal Crossing, and perhaps a few other bits. But as always, it may be too little and too late. The company stands back and lets others pioneer these technologies, and in doing so it ruins its console's own image for the possibilities. Gamers think of PS2 and Xbox when they think of online, not GameCube. Nintendo has another uphill battle because of this, and one I don't foresee it overcoming.

FranPrime4: True, but to its credit it does have an online RPG available for the console with Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II. The problem is, the Sega title isn't a brand-new sequel. So, I think a lot of people will see it as a rehash from the Dreamcast days, even though it does have quite a bit of new content. The other problem is that, like you said, it's not a major Nintendo initiative. It's one title. There's no online structure or plan. It's incredibly lackluster for a company that was once ambitious enough to consider letting people participate in the Lotto via an online network.

MattCubist: We sure are whining a lot.

MattCubist: Is there anything nice we can say about GameCube?

FranPrime4: That's because I'll be playing Xbox Live this holiday season, and not GameCube Online.

MattCubist: What are you going to play on Xbox Live, by the way?

MattCubist: I personally have no interest in PS2 or Xbox online.

MattCubist: Or GameCube, for that matter.

MattCubist: But I don't represent the audience by any means, if sales figures of PS2's modem are to be believed.

FranPrime4: Definitely NFL 2K3 and Unreal Championship. Not sure what else I might check out, but the voice capability and broadband will be fun.

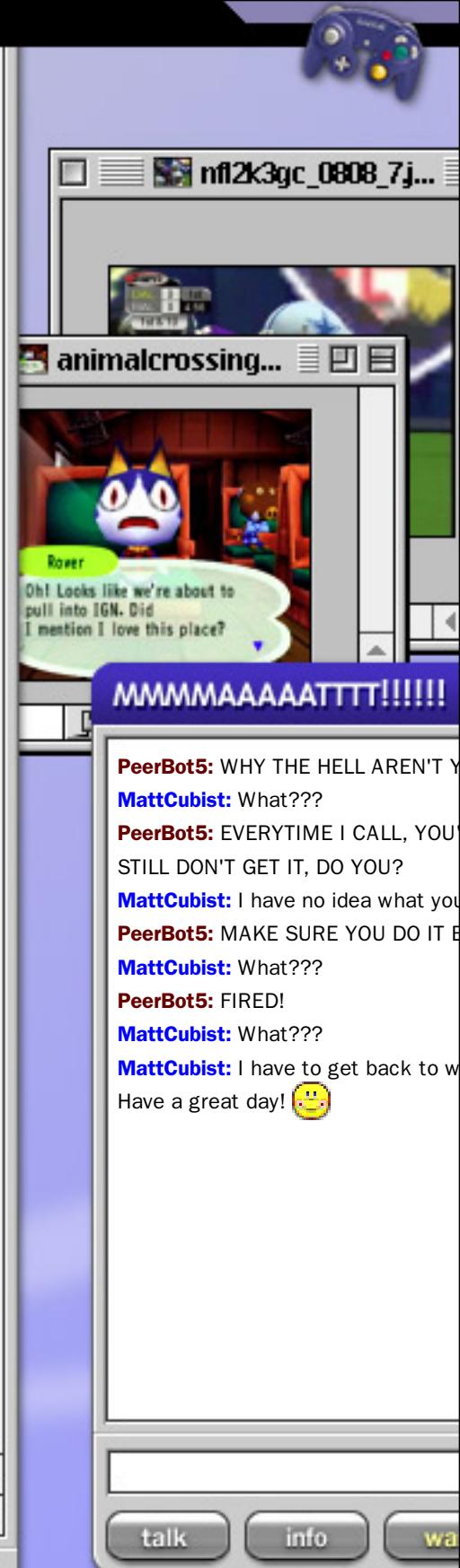
FranPrime4: Mostly because it's new, more than anything else.

FranPrime4: I mean, I could play Unreal online here on the PC. Or, even better, Battlefield 1942.

MattCubist: Then again, there are millions of gamers who can't afford a high-end PC to do their nasty online deeds.

MattCubist: So there's that.

FranPrime4: Very true. I think it will be successful in terms of creating a buzz, even if it's a total black hole to Microsoft's earnings.



...The Glass is Half-Full...

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...The Glass is Half-Full...



FranPrime4: But, yes, why don't we end on a high note and discuss what we think Nintendo has done right so far.

MattCubist: Didn't Microsoft turn a bi-ga-trillion dollar profit this quarter despite losing something like \$900 on every Xbox sold? Surely this is the work of the devil.

FranPrime4: Yea, that's what Nintendo and Sony have to face up to. Microsoft is impenetrable. It won't stop until it has won out. That may take two generations or so, but it's here for the long run.

MattCubist: The company may as well ship Xbox for free, include three games, and hand it out at McDonald's: buy two cheeseburgers and get an Xbox and DOA Volleyball free.

MattCubist: Ah well – high notes, yes.

MattCubist: ...Uh.

MattCubist: As much as I bitch and moan, and indeed I do this quite a lot, at the end of the day I plan to make sweet love to Metroid Prime for many, many hours. If the game will have me, I will spend the rest of my days making it happy.

FranPrime4: I think you know how I feel about Samus at this point...but that won't stop me from bragging about Retro Studios work for a moment. Can you believe how incredible the company has turned out to be!? The 35 or so people left at Retro Studios are absolutely, without a doubt, some of the best artists, programmers, and game designers in the industry. Nintendo will owe the success of its 2002 season to those guys, I'm betting. Rare's Star Fox Adventures turned out to not really be a system seller of any kind. That's gotta' burn for letting the company spend like four years on it. So, the investment in Retro Studios was more than worth it. They just need to have them crank out a sequel now.

FranPrime4: There are other good things that Nintendo has done, though.

MattCubist: Yeah, I have to agree about Retro Studios. Rocky beginning, but the developer seems to have bloomed nicely.

MattCubist: I'm happy with the Platinum GameCube. I'm fairly happy with the Metroid Prime commercial. I think it's a bit cheesy, but it gets the job done better than most commercials. I think Nintendo finally realizes it's in a sticky situation, which is perhaps the best thing to happen to the publisher in years. So with that, it's making some strides – the recognition of the so-called "mature" market, for instance. Cube Clubs. Stronger advertising. Partnerships with companies like Capcom for Resident Evil 0. Good, good and good. But I'm not satisfied. I want more of it. I want to see the Big N blitz the market as I know it could. Get the exclusives that make the difference. Give gamers a reason to talk about GameCube at school and at work. Word of mouth, in the end, is what's going to change the perception of the console.

FranPrime4: Yea, this is probably Nintendo's strongest lineup it has ever released. Yet, oddly, that doesn't seem to be enough for this market. It's going to get drowned out by GTA: Vice

...The Glass is Half-Full (continued)

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ICcube: VOLUME ONE

...The Glass is Half-Full...

City. As you mentioned, the only thing that can really make a difference now is something to actually change the perception of the mass market, who views MS and Sony as the two key players here in the U.S. Metroid Prime might be one of the most brilliant games of the year, and it will sell to a lot of the current GCN fanbase, I think. However, is it going to sell another million systems anytime soon? Somehow I doubt that. Something bigger needs to happen.

...The End.

MattCubist: Ah well. So it goes. In the end, I still think Nintendo's holiday will be pretty damn strong, and if the company manages to get Zelda out in Japan this December that should sell a few systems. I just hope it can keep up the momentum.

FranPrime4: Yea, at this point Nintendo has already carved out a path for itself. There's a lot that simply cannot be changed. Nonetheless, I do think a good amount of GameCubes will be sold this holiday. Nintendo hardly has a flop on its hands with GameCube. In fact, with Super Mario Sunshine, Resident Evil 0, Metroid Prime, James Bond 007: NightFire – which you know will turn some heads on GCN – and pretty strong third party support, I think sales will be good. To be a true success in my mind, though, Nintendo needs to outsell Xbox in the U.S. this season. Because, if you can't do that with the aforementioned games, there are some very big issues to resolve.

FranPrime4: And I'm spent.

MattCubist: Absolutely. And done.

— Fran Mirabella III & Matt Casamassina ■



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AARON BOULDING EDITOR LETTER ::

10.28.02 - The fourth quarter of the year, affectionately known as Q4 around here, is the most important time of year for many retailers both within and outside the videogame industry. Supposedly, the last three months of the calendar year represent the time when consumers are most likely to part with the largest chunk of their disposal income. It's money time. But the fourth quarter of 2001, taught us that a lot of quality videogames will be overlooked when you present so many options across so many platforms at the same time. Sure, a high profile title like *Panzer Dragoon* may have benefited from a few extra months of development time when it got pushed from Fall 2002 to a generic Q1 2003 release, but you can be sure avoiding the holiday stampede of titles has plenty to do with that decision. Avoiding a blackout at retail has long been a driving force in the record industry and we'll see how well the same strategy translates to videogames. Are free-spending parents caught up in the holiday spirit still the crucial factor when it comes to holiday blockbusters, or do videogame fans with year-round interests and year-round spending habits make the difference between Christmas hits and misses?

EDITOR INFO ::

Publisher
IGN Ent.

Developer
Iceberg Slim

Genre
Troublemaker

Peripherals
- Sanyo SCP 1500 Dual Band PCS phone with a broken antenna

Extras
- Hot Sauce

OFFICE ABUSE ::

If Jennifer Lopez can insure her ass for a million dollars then we should all be able to insure our thumbs for beer money and straws.

MOST WANTED ::

1. DoA Xtreme Beach Volleyball
2. Sudeki
3. Halo 2
4. CounterStrike
5. WWE Raw 2

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GAME OF THE MONTH ::

Hitman 2 must be considered the surprise hit of the pre-holiday season for Xbox owners. Even with the Howard Stern promo spots, Eidos' assassination simulator is a legitimate good time and should provide the perfect warm up to *Splinter Cell*...a Game of the Year candidate itself.

WHAT THE EDITORS ARE PLAYING :: JEDI KNIGHT II: JEDI OUTCAST

PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS | DEVELOPER: VICARIOUS VISIONS
GENRE: ACTION/ADVENTURE

Star Wars Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast has been getting a lot of spin time in our debug units, even though it's not coming out until late November. It instantly catapulted to the position of "Top LucasArts Port" on Xbox. This is mainly because of its PC roots but the transition to console has been especially smooth. While it's really a first person shooter, complete with Stormtrooper rifles and Chewbacca's bowcaster, there's no doubt that it's the lightsaber action that sets this sucker apart, just like it did on the PC. The third person engine is solid and reminds me of the animation/control of *Conflict Desert Storm* (of all things). And as a side note, I have no idea how this is going to work on GameCube because JKII uses every button on the Xbox controller as it is, and we all know the GCN lacks a suitable number of buttons for third party games.





STOLEN The Diaries of an IGN Xbox Intern

WE PRY INTO THE UNSUSPECTING
LIFE OF OUR NEWEST XBOX
GOPHER TO GIVE YOU A
BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT
HIS FRIGHTENING DAILY GRIND.

by Kaiser Hwang



STOLEN The Diaries of an IGN Xbox Intern

Once upon a time, in the southern amazon known as Texas, I was going to school at the University of Texas Austin and studying computer science while simultaneously working at MP3 site Audiogalaxy. Everything's going great until the RIAA files a lawsuit against AG and shut us down to some extent. I leave the company and decide to go to school full-time and finally graduate in May. A few weeks before classes start, I see a story on IGN about open intern positions. I apply, and suddenly my life changes.

I receive an email from IGNPC's Mr. Butts saying I made it to the next round of interviews, and that I need to send in two writing samples based on the two press releases he sends me. I send one back with the headline, "Super Mario Star in Red Faction II," thinking I'll never hear any word back. Oddly enough, a week later I get a call asking me to come in for a face-to-face interview. I buy a plane ticket and head out several days later for the sunny San Francisco skies.

I fly almost 2,000 miles to California for a 15-minute interview. Everything went seemingly well, and a few days later I fly back to Austin awaiting a response. While I was gone, school had already started, and I had already registered. Not knowing where destiny would lead me, I attend class and try desperately to catch up while I waited to hear back from IGN. I finally receive a call back from Mr. Butts telling me I start work in roughly two and a half weeks. Now all I had to do was find a place to stay in California, pack up all of my belongings, withdraw from school, find someone to sublet my house in Austin, find someone to watch my cat, plan a route to San Francisco, and actually make the drive.

I barely accomplish all of the above, and make the 2,000 mile trek to San Fran. I arrive Saturday and start on Monday. I arrive Monday morning and wait outside for someone to let me in. Mr. Butts

shows me around and tries to find things for me to do. Now, earlier, during my interview with Mr. Butts, we had a short conversation about where I wanted to work, if I were get the internship. I told him that I would ideally like to work for the Xbox site. He asked me if I'd like to work for the PC site, and I said, "Sure, but I don't have too much experience in that field."

So, on my first day at IGN, the first thing they have me do is make movies of PC games that I really suck at. It eventually got to the point where Ivan would play the game while I captured the movie. I do other miscellaneous stuff for the

rest of the day and finally go home.

The next day, I receive word that I'll be working for the Xbox guys and not the PC. This was a small relief on my part only because I really suck at RTS, simulation, micro-management, and other popular PC genre games. I receive my own desk, PC, TV, and all that other good stuff, and finally get my first game to play: *BloodRayne*. Woohoo!

Now, a month later, I've fallen into a relatively steady routine. I work roughly from 9 AM-8 PM, although I have just finished pulling off my first all-nighter plus next-dayer, which was an experience in itself. I write news, previews, and reviews, take screenshots and movies, and try to help out with anything else that's needed. Are the hours long? Yes. Is the work hard? Sure. Is it fun? Absolutely.

Now that I've left my close friends, my band, my adorable kitty cat, school, and most of what you'd call a social life in San Francisco, do I have any regrets? Not at all. When I was seven years old, my parents would ask me what I wanted to do when I grew up. I always told them I wanted to be a game counselor for Nintendo Power. You know, those guys who answer your questions when you get stuck in a game. Since then, I've always wanted to work in the game industry. What exactly I wanted to do, I wasn't sure...

I initially wanted to be a game artist, so I practiced everyday and took TONS of art classes. Then I thought I wanted to be a game programmer, so I bought a computer and have been programming for the past six years. My whole life wasn't games though. Somewhere in the middle of it all, I played in more bands than you can count with dreams of being a rock star, I tried to form a start-up with a couple fellow programmers licensing a form of Auto-CAD program written by a friend, I worked for a design company thinking maybe that's what I wanted to do, and I even studied music theory hoping to one day be a composer. But through it all, I always came home and fired up the ol' game systems for a couple of hours before I went to sleep.

So here I am. Official IGN Xbox Intern / Poseur Wannabe Editor. I don't get paid, I don't get out often, and worst of all, I had to review *Rayman Arena* - yet I still get up every morning looking forward to work. Why? Where do I start? Well, there are the people I work with. All the self-proclaimed, sarcastic, and bitter old men who surround me, taunt me, and pile work on me. I think they're just a bunch of peachy and swell guys. And the games. Who wouldn't want to review all the games no one else wants to? How about the free game shwag? My current collection includes a bottle of sweat, a Kelly

STOLEN The Diaries of an IGN Xbox Intern

Slater Pro Surfer visor, and some dental floss. These were all hand-me-downs, too! Oh, and there's free bagels on Friday.

Of all the things I've experienced in San Francisco, I'll never forget the last words said to me on my first day here at IGN. On my way out the door, Mr. Butts says, "We all still think you're crazy for moving from Texas!" He hasn't seen anything yet.

Now comes the part full of random facts about myself that are in no logical order or make any sense.

Top Ten Lists

10 Good Shows I've Seen At One Point In My Life

1. GodSpeedYouBlackEmperor @ Stubbs
2. Air @ La Zona Rosa
3. Belle and Sebastian @ Backyard
4. Beck solo acoustic @ Westlake High School
5. Liars and Yeah Yeah Yeahs @ the Fillmore
6. Bright Eyes @ Great American Music Hall
7. White Stripes @ Emos
8. the Strokes @ Stubbs
9. Neutral Milk Hotel @ Electric Lounge

10 Bands I'm Listening To In No Particular Order

1. Bright Eyes
2. Liars
3. Interpol
4. A.R.E. Weapons
5. Flaming Lips
6. the Fall
7. WIRE
8. Suicide
9. Whiskeytown
10. Wheat

10 Random things I've learned while at IGN:

1. Boobs sell games
2. Violence sells games
3. Boobs and Violence sells LOTS of games
4. Emailing can be just as good as a message board
5. Yelling can be just as effective as emailing
6. Cold office air makes everyone grumpy
7. Back-ends are the enemy
8. Only good and bad malls exist
9. Not all game shwag is good
10. Take everything everyone tells you to do and do the opposite



10 Things heard most often inside IGN office (according to me)

Note: The following quotes are not representative of my views and ideals. Just everyone else's.

1. Fran is gay.
2. I think the backend wants to !@#\$% again.
3. Oh, do we have a game for you, Kaiser.
4. You'll really love this game, Kaiser.
5. This awesome new game just came in the mail for you, Kaiser.
6. What are you guys making Kaiser play?
7. Your mom did what?
8. You sister did what?
9. It's your lucky day, Kaiser.
10. Fran is gay.

On my first all-nighter:

So there I am, working my usual day when I get forced into working late on the *Blinx* strategy guide. I reluctantly stay (not that I had any real choice) and start typing away. I decide to take a short break at about 2 AM when IGNPC editor Ivan comes up behind me and says, "If you cherish your life, you'll take *UT 2003* screenshots for my guide." Again, I'm forced to agree. After another hour or so, I'm ready to work on my *Blinx* guide again when, Cory, the evilest editor of them all, handcuffs me to my desk and coerces me into copyediting 4,679 reviews for the IGN Buyer's Guide. [Ed's Note: Lies! All lies!] I finally finish at 7 AM. Ready to sleep, I realize that it's only Friday, and I still have another day of work! I beg to go home early, but the Xbox guys feel no mercy. I stay the entire day and finally get home at 7 PM to sleep in the comforts of my 10-dollar sleeping bag.



STOLEN The Diaries of an IGN Xbox Intern

On Chris Carle:

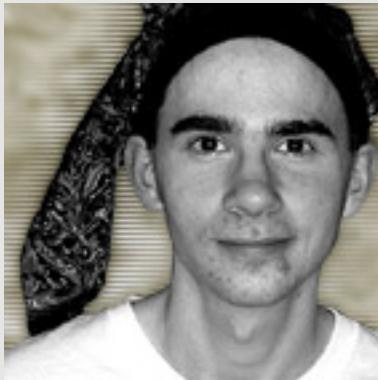
Chris Carle, Editor-In-Chief of IGN Guides, is someone I met early on, seeing as how he sits right in front of me. Well, he tries to be nice to the "new guy" one Friday night and asks me to go see *Secretary*, the new movie starring James Spader and Maggie Gyllenhaal. I didn't really want to go, but he gave me that look. Y'know, the one that says, "You'll go if you know what's good for you," so of course I say I'll go. For those of you unfamiliar with the movie, it's a dark-comedy-love story with a little S&M thrown in for good measure. Everything's all fine and dandy until the after the movie. He asks me if anyone knew I was going to the movie. I say no, and he gives me this strange, awkward grin. He then suggests that I come over to his place. Having seen enough movies in my time to know what was going on, I start to run. I barely escape and stay up all night, worried the Carle followed me home. The next day, the Carle was not at his desk. Actually, I haven't seen him since. What I have seen is a strange Asian guy sitting near the Carle's desk, sending me emails about tampons and the DOA girls. Oh well, it's better than the Carle...

On Austin vs. San Francisco

You know, Austin and San Francisco really remind me of each other, just on different scales. If Austin were bigger, had cooler weather, and had more hills, they would be about the same. You have the city, but you also have nature. There is also a relatively good music scene in both cities (though Austin's is a bit better), as well as game/tech companies. Some of the things I miss most about Austin are easy parking, cheap rent, decent traffic, awesome shows (SXSW!), and good Tex-Mex. I actually complained about the above things while living there (except for the Tex-Mex and shows), but compared to here, it's all true. How about San Francisco? There's a lot to like here, too. Great weather, bigger city, better nature (I love the Redwood Preserves), and TONS of good Asian/vegetarian restaurants.

If I had to pick one place to live, it would have to be San Francisco. Just thinking about the humidity and heat and mosquitoes makes me want to sit in the freezing IGN office in only my Speedo. Sure, I hate the parking tickets (I just got 2 in one day!) and expensive gas, but not having to blow an air-conditioner 25-8 is nice. Plus, I can always fly back for SXSW. ■





DAVID SMITH

EDITOR INFO ::**Publisher**

AI Gore

Developer

UNC-Chapel Hill

Genre

Ugly

Peripherals

Extremely Dangerous Drugs

Extras

- Laserdiscs
- Porn

OFFICE ABUSE ::

Total typos in Doug's latest news story: half a dozen and still counting.

MOST WANTED ::

1. Star Ocean: Till The End Of Time
2. Tales of Destiny 2
3. Sakura Taisen
~Atsuki Chishio Ni~
4. Final Fantasy X-2
5. Guilty Gear X2

For PS2 news, reviews, previews, and more, visit:
<http://ps2.ign.com>

DAVID SMITH
EDITOR LETTER ::

10.24.02 - Welcome back to another exciting installment of IGN Unplugged, the best thing to happen to the Internet since dynamic-HTML full-motion stereo-sound pop-up ads. This month, the PS2 section takes a bit of a different tack, looking a couple of months ahead to the market after the holidays. Traditionally, Christmas is where it's at in the videogame business -- all the big titles come out in time to be gobbled up by harried parents and their greedy gamer children. This year isn't exactly that much different, but 2003 is another matter. Plenty of this fall's hot-shot games have now become next spring's top titles, thanks to the odd delay and bit of rescheduling, and we've got some tips on what to save your money for after the turn of the year.

Of course, it's entirely possible that all of you readers out there will still be busy binging on this fall's biggest title, but we can't help it if all you want to do is murder hookers. Kids these days. We despair sometimes, we really do.


GAME OF THE MONTH ::

Well, what game did you expect? *GTA: Vice City* is the only name in town this November, with literally millions of gamers queued up to hop in their favorite car and get freaky with their new chainsaws. Nothing to be ashamed of, but we suggest that you not let your mother see.

WHAT THE EDITORS ARE PLAYING ::
GUILTY GEAR X2

PUBLISHER: **SAMMY STUDIOS** | DEVELOPER: **ARC SYSTEM WORKS** | GENRE: **2D FIGHTING**

Heaven, hell, it doesn't really matter, because all we want to do is rock. As prophesied in Unplugged two issues past, Sammy is bringing over this gorgeous fighting sequel in time for Christmas, and if we had our druthers, it'd be nothing but BUTT ROCK~! burning out the speakers all the way through New Year's. This Thanksgiving, we offer our sincerest wishes of gratitude to Daisuke Ishiwatari for all he has done to entertain us.


SUIKODEN III

PUBLISHER: **KONAMI** | DEVELOPER: **KONAMI TYO** | GENRE: **RPG**

We had to wait a little longer than expected, but all 108 Stars of Destiny have finally made it home in superb 3D. Konami TYO has outdone itself with this sprawling adventure, integrating a huge cast of characters into a series of intertwining plotlines, each telling a bit of the story from a different character's perspective. It's one of the best pieces of scenario design to grace the genre in some time, and most definitely this year's finest RPG.



Home for The Holidays

FROM

**The PS2 starts off 2003 with a bang –
don't let the Christmas rush distract you.**

By: David Smith

Let's be honest with ourselves. The fall season of AD 2002 is about one game, and one game only: *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. The mailbags, message boards, and nationwide buzz prove that while American gamers have many options with which to entertain themselves this holiday season – many genres and styles spanning the entire spectrum of virtual entertainment – all they really want to do is cruise around Miami and kill hookers.

And there's certainly nothing wrong with that, nothing at all. But time marches on, and that stack of chainsawed prostitutes in the basement may begin to draw unwanted attention. What to do when that game is over? Well, it should be round about the New Year by then, when a massive wave of hot PS2 games is due to bombard the market.

2003 is strange that way. Normally, the quarter after Christmas is a dead zone, empty of high-profile releases, but a series of key delays and accidents of scheduling mean that some major, major games will be popping up between January and March. So save some of that Christmas money, because you won't want to find yourself bereft of game-buying dollars when some of these suckers

hit the shelves. Here, for your edification, are the games that hit after the holidays.

Noteworthy Delays ::

Delays happen. A date set when a game still has a year left in development can be more than a little shaky when things get down to the wire. Sometimes this can upset your carefully laid plans (and it certainly upsets the numbers on corporate balance sheets), but remember that it also usually makes for a better game.





HOME FROM THE HOLIDAYS



Devil May Cry 2 – Capcom – January 2003 ▲

Shinji Mikami's stylish, hard sequel was originally slated for an ephemeral "winter" release. Eventually, Capcom explained that, well, January is part of winter, isn't it? This one hits Japan on January 30th and the US on almost the exact same day – there's to be very little lag in the international release, unlike the long wait for the first DMC – and the Tokyo Game Show demo indicates that you'll want to make some time for it.



Pride FC – THQ – Spring 2003 ▲

By all accounts, its developers at Anchor have this one finished and in the can, but it's waiting on a more concentrated US push from the premier Japanese mixed martial-arts promotion. Trust us when we say that it's very good, a substantial leap ahead of Ultimate Fighting Championships old and new, and then sit back and wait. We're sorry to have to say so, but unfortunately, it's not our game to sell.



Red Dead Revolver – Capcom – Spring 2003 ▲

Angel Studios has a superb bit of atmosphere on its hands here, so it's good to see its release moving back a little in order to tidy up its design issues. Its playable showing at the Tokyo Game Show repeated the same refrain we heard at E3: great concept, great looks, and some rather iffy controls and camera handling. There's a good five months between now and the planned debut of this Western shooter, though, so hopefully the final phases of tuning will bring it into line.



Tomb Raider: The Angel Of Darkness – Eidos – February 2003 ▲

Given the fleeting nature of the game's promotion – we barely saw anything playable out of Lara Croft aside from a limited E3 demo – it came as little surprise when Eidos and Core's next-generation Tomb Raider slipped into February. The extra time can only do this game good, though. Expectations are such that Core will have to deliver something pretty impressive if it wants to escape another round of critical derision.



The Getaway – SCEA – Spring 2003 ▲

Another one that slipped into the latter half of the winter season, Sony's highly touted piece of criminal cinema still has our hopes up. What its creators at Team Soho want to do, in terms of visual reality and movie-like presentation, is extremely impressive. Now let's just hope that they can pull it off. As with Tomb Raider, a little extra development time can only be a good thing.



HOME FROM THE HOLIDAYS



The Sims – Maxis/EA – Spring 2003 ▲

Many serious gamers tend to view The Sims as a curious aberration atop the PC sales charts. Nevertheless, it's a hugely addictive simulation to many, and given the broad userbase supporting the PlayStation 2, it could tear up the console rankings just as easily. EA quietly moved this one past the holiday season -- and properly speaking, we haven't seen much of it since E3 -- but recent screenshots have picked up interest in the many changes that are being made for the PS2 version. We expect some impressive sights after the turn of the year.



Auto Modellista – Capcom – February 2003 ▲

Capcom has the first quarter all locked up, doesn't it? Though its cel-shaded street racer was playable online in Japan, the import version used a system entirely incompatible with SCEA's American network strategy. Thus, it had to go back to the shop for a complete retooling of its online gameplay code, which kicked its release from the fall into the spring. Given the choice between playing the game later or playing the game without network racing, we'll take the former every time, so we don't see much room to complain.



.hack Volume 1 – Bandai – February 2003 ▲

Though Bandai is keeping very quiet about .hack, so quiet that its jump from October to February slipped our attention for several days, it has the potential to become a sleeper hit among PS2 RPG fans. A cleverly designed dungeon hack wrapped in the presentation of a massively-multiplayer online game, it has a boatload of quirky personality thanks to its innovative concept and sharp artwork. While we'd like to play it soon, perhaps it will draw more attention later.

Worth The Wait ::

Along with the games that slipped into the beginning of 2003, there are some big names that were aimed there all along. Sure, the market's gotten a bit more crowded in the interim, but these will still stand out enough to be worth a hard look.





HOME FROM THE HOLIDAYS



Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner – Konami – March 2003 ▲

Along with Konami JPN's other big production, *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance*, the sequel to *Z.O.E* is holding out until the spring. As is the case with *Devil May Cry 2*, though, it doesn't look like we'll have to wait as long as before to play the American version, with no more than a month or two separating the Eastern and Western release dates. We are, of course, focusing all our optimism on this game, to make sure that the complete package equals the power of its amazing graphics.



Xenosaga – Namco – February 2003 ▲

How long ago was it that this came and went in Japan? By our reckoning, more than a year will eventually separate the debuts of the original and its US-localized counterpart. Reactions from import fans have been somewhat mixed, but we maintain that, regardless of how well Monolith Soft has done when it comes to building compelling gameplay into its story, we will happily stare at the cute girl with the glasses for as long as the seemingly endless cut-scenes require us to. The author makes no apologies for his peculiarities, and also no guarantees to the unwitting purchaser who may read them as genuine advice.



Tenchu 3 – Activision – February 2003 ▲

Activision has now taken over the *Tenchi* series wholesale, bringing in a new developer to keep the ninja action franchise going. The result, however, looks better than we had any right to expect. Though it's not a graphical powerhouse by any means, it looks to present everything that made the PlayStation *Tenchi* great and then some. Gadgets, stealth, a funky hybrid atmosphere, and more than a little creative death are all the right ingredients for a worthy successor.

Matters Of Import ::

The import scene isn't what it used to be, back when the yen was dropping like a stone and the Saturn and PlayStation offered cakewalks around their territorial lockouts, but a few gamers still actively follow the Japanese end of things, and it still has the odd major title coming after the new year.



Star Ocean: Till the End of Time – Enix – March 2003 ▲

Certainly the highest-profile delay in Japan this year, tri-Ace's hotly-anticipated sequel moved from November 28 (the day RPG releases go to die, with *Tales of Destiny 2* due for a slugfest against *Dark Chronicle* and a recently-released *Breath of Fire V*, plus *Unlimited: SaGa* coming a couple of weeks later) into March of 2003. The extra time can only do it good – its core gameplay seemed rock-solid at the Tokyo Game Show, so some more tuning for its scenario design should simply make a good RPG better. It's a pity about Enix's fourth-quarter results, since they now have to be carried by *Torneko's Great Adventure 3*, but the old one about omelets and eggs still applies.



HOME FROM THE HOLIDAYS



Venus & Braves – Namco – February 2003 ▲

Given that its predecessor Seven never even got its feet wet in the Pacific, a localization of this beautiful 2D RPG perhaps seems like a bit much to hope for. An untranslated RPG is becoming a rare commodity these days, but if that's what you're on the lookout for, this looks like a fine choice come February – great graphics, an expanded story, and a friendly tactical battle system built around a huge cast of well-designed supporting characters.

Save Yer Pennies ::

No matter what genre you're into, there's something coming in the beginning of 2003, and the turn of the year looks especially heavy on action and RPG titles. Maybe you'll still be stuck on the streets of Vice City, but as soon as you feel like a vacation, there's a host of superior games waiting for you. So keep an eye on those release lists once the Christmas vacation concludes, and don't let a fine game pass you by.

– **Dave Smith, IGN PS2** ■



Sakura Taisen ~Atsuki Chishio Ni~ – Sega – February 2003 ▲

It's a shame to have to say this, but the next game in Sega's popular Sakura Taisen series will continue the trend of keeping that franchise in Japan. Due out in February, *Sakura Taisen ~Atsuki Chishio Ni~* will treat the series' many Japanese fans to a PS2-powered remake of the first game in the series, complete with realtime 3D graphics, perfect MPEG-2 animated cutscenes, additional scenario elements, and the substantially improved combat system from the two Dreamcast games in the series. The classic characters remain (as conceived by comic artist Kosuke Fujishima), but otherwise it's a whole new game.

One would think this would be a perfect introduction to the series for Western fans, but Sega of America is passing on this one. Word is that the next original *Sakura* game will be headed stateside, and sending out the remake in advance would be the perfect way to get this market ready for that sequel, but apparently it's not to be. Fans should get their import dollars ready, especially if they want the sharp limited edition – complete with pocket watch.



CRAIG HARRIS

EDITOR INFO ::**Publisher**

Unsigned

Developer24-Hour Game Show Network
Marathon**Genre**

Extreme Laziness

PeripheralsMysterious, extra port in
midsection**Extras**Diet Dr. Pepper and Starbucks
Double Shot addiction.**OFFICE ABUSE ::**

When meeting new people in the industry, Craig always makes sure to swipe their business cards into his e-Reader – just in case.

MOST WANTED ::

1. NES e-Reader Cards
Volume 3, 4, 5...17, 18, 19...
2. Pokémon Sapphire.
To hell with Ruby
3. Metroid Fusion
4. Metroid Prime
5. Metroid NES hidden extra

For GBA news, reviews,
previews, and more, visit:
<http://gba.ign.com>

CRAIG HARRIS
EDITOR LETTER ::

10.28.02 - After talking with several publishers and developers of Game Boy Advance product, it's becoming quite evident: next year is going to be a bit tighter when it comes to the GBA's gaming library.

During the Holiday 2002 season, there will be more than 125 new titles for the Game Boy Advance. That's a whole lot for any system, but for the GBA and it's smaller profit margins, it's going to be a tough sell for the lesser-known games. Stores like Best Buy and Wal-Mart are actually shrinking their GBA sections to make room for the explosively selling PlayStation 2 Greatest Hits line, which means that there's less shelf space for tons of new games.

The result? Far fewer games will be in development, since the guarantee of getting exposure in every retailer will be way smaller next year. Fewer games mean less chance for your favorite game brand for GBA, but it also means that retailers will only stock the titles that will sell. Is that a good or bad thing?

We'll see what happens next year.

**GAME OF
THE MONTH ::**

Jazz Jackrabbit is returning to the GBA gaming scene for the holiday season. He's received a bit of retooling, losing his attitude but gaining some clothes. The GBA game will have single-cartridge link for four player battles – not too shabby for a videogame hero's revival.

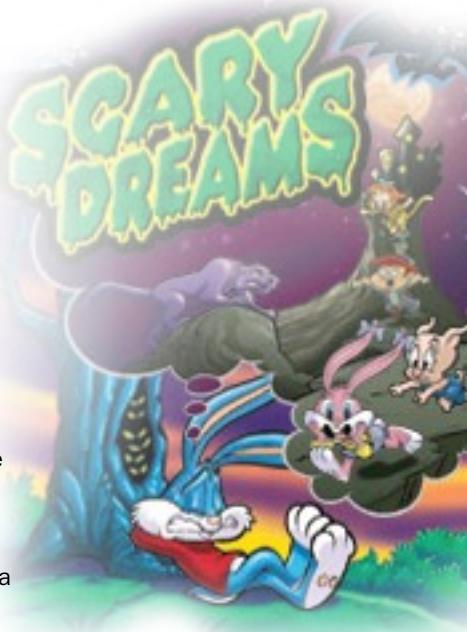
WHAT THE EDITORS ARE PLAYING ::
TINY TOONS ADVENTURES: SCARY DREAMS

PUBLISHER: CONSPIRACY ENT. | DEVELOPER: TREASURE | GENRE: PLATFORM

One of the big names in action gaming is a Japanese company called Treasure. During the 8 and 16-bit days, these guys made some of the key games for Konami, from the *Castlevania* titles to *Super Contra* before breaking off and doing their own thing with titles such as *Gunstar Heroes*, *Stretch Panic*, and *Sin & Punishment*.

The company is also working on a handful of GBA titles; the first is an action title featuring Buster Bunny called *Tiny Toons Adventures: Scary Dreams*. It's a strange combination of brawler and platform elements, where Buster must punch his way through several different levels of danger. He can even call upon one of his Tiny Toons friends for a little combo action.

It's different, I'll give it that. The combo system's pretty neat, but the game is just a little repetitive. It's already out in Europe, but Conspiracy Games will ship this title in the US this December.





SPECIFICATIONS

CPU

32-Bit ARM with embedded memory

MEMORY

32 Kbyte + 96 Kbyte VRAM (in CPU), 256 Kbyte WRAM (external of CPU)

SCREEN

2.9" TFT reflective screen
240x160 resolution 40.8mm x 61.2mm screen size 32,768 possible colors
511 simultaneous colors in character mode; 32,768 simultaneous colors in bitmap mode



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE GBA

YOU PLAY IT, YOU LOVE IT, BUT CRANKY CRAIG IS HERE TO MAKE SURE YOU ENJOY THE FULL POTENTIAL OF YOUR GBA.



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE GBA

The Game Boy Advance system is set to out-sell all the systems on the market this holiday season due to its price, portability, and gaming library (over 250). But there are several people out there who get the GBA system without knowing a whole lot about it, and there are plenty of gamers out there that don't have it and know nothing.

So, I'm taking it upon myself to inform the general gaming community about some of the more prominent points about the Game Boy Advance system. There will be a few of you out there that already have this stuff engrained in your common knowledge, but bear in mind that, with the amount of email I receive on a daily basis, there's a good majority of people that don't know any of it.

The GBA is "Backward Compatible."

Believe it or not, but there are still people out there that don't realize that the Game Boy Advance can play every single game made for the Game Boy all the way back to when the very first Game Boy system came out in 1989. Similar to the way Sony made the PlayStation 2 backward compatible, the GBA actually has the Game Boy Color hardware embedded in the GBA circuitry. When a Game Boy or Game Boy Color cartridge is plugged into the GBA system, the cartridge shape triggers a switch inside the unit that will boot the system into Game Boy Color mode. Since the GBA's screen is more detailed than the previous Game Boy systems, the image will appear bordered in its full resolution. By hitting the L or R buttons during play, you can actually stretch the image to fit the wider screen. It'll make the Game Boy games look a little warped, but it's a neat effect.

Black and white Game Boy games look great on the GBA's screen, but Game Boy Color-exclusive games might appear a bit darker than they did on the actual GBC system. Some later Game Boy Color games, like *Shantae* and *Wendy: Every Witch Way*, auto-sense the Game Boy Advance hardware and brighten up the colors for the GBA LCD screen. A couple of these GBC games even unlock hidden things if they're played in a GBA system.

This backward compatibility simply means that the GBA system has the largest gaming library in history. Literally.

The GBA is not a Super NES.

The Game Boy Advance has a lot of power under its hood, and when the developers of the system were creating the

darn thing, they obviously looked to Nintendo's past when it was giving life to its hardware. The Super NES was definitely a basis for some of the Game Boy Advance's capabilities: the GBA can handle similar Mode 7 effects as well as transparency layering as the Super NES did back more than a decade ago. But just because the system has similar technical capabilities doesn't mean that it's a snap for developers to move your favorite Super NES game to the Game Boy Advance, nor does it mean that it's possible that some knowledgeable programmer will create a Super NES emulator for the GBA. To get a game such as the SNES' version of *Yoshi's Island* running on the GBA handheld actually takes months and months of development time – it's not a cakewalk to port from one system to the other. The GBA and SNES are two entirely different gaming beasts, internally.

The GBA actually has a lot more power under the hood than the SNES ever did. The system's 32-bit architecture means that the system can handle more scrolling backgrounds and more on-screen colors. The system can even scale and rotate individual sprites, something the SNES couldn't do without the help of the FX chip cartridge add-on. Some developers have even tapped into the 32-bit processor's raw power to pull off some exciting and successful 3D games that match the first generation of PlayStation gaming experiences. Almost.

SPECIFICATIONS:

SIZE(mm)

Width 144.5mm

Depth 24.5mm

Height 24.5mm

WEIGHT 140g

POWER 2 AA batteries

BATTERY LIFE 15 hours

SOFTWARE Cartridge format

Game Boy and Game Boy Color compatible





THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE GBA

The GBA cannot be played on TV via the GameCube.

Even since before the Game Boy Advance and GameCube systems launched in the US, Nintendo touted the plans to link the two systems together via a simple cable that connects from the GBA's link port to the GameCube's controller port. This ten dollar cable basically opens up a whole new world of possibilities in gaming, and a few GameCube titles, like *Animal Crossing*, *Sonic Adventure 2*, and *Metroid Prime* feature different ways that this cable can be utilized.

But, we have to make this perfectly clear: this cable will not enable players to play their Game Boy Advance on television. It's pretty much a technical impossibility. To be able to play the game through the GameCube means that Nintendo would actually have to have a Game Boy Advance emulator running on the hardware and that the GBA cartridge must be put into the GameCube's internal memory. For argument's sake, let's say the GameCube can emulate the GBA, no problem. The Game Boy Advance's link port only transfers data at about 2 kilobytes a second, and the size of the games for the system begin at four megabytes, or 4,096K. Basic math will tell you that to get a small sized cartridge into the GameCube memory will take more than a half hour...and that's if Nintendo would even create a GameCube title that would allow such a thing.

The GBA has a link feature called "Multi-boot."

Definitely one of the coolest features of the Game Boy Advance is its ability to download programs into its internal memory via the link cable port, without the need of a cartridge in the slot. When you power on a cartridge-free GBA system, the system will be put in a "wait state," waiting for a data signal to come through the link port. This is handy for many reasons, but it's used most of all in "multi-boot" compatible games.

More than 25 games in the Game Boy Advance library offer multiplayer link-cable mode that only require one copy of the game. This is called "multi-boot" in development circles because the developers create a version of the game that can be sent to any cartridge-free

GBA and "boot" up the system. Since the GBA only has 256K of internal memory, the developers have to shrink down their games to fit into the system's memory in order to take advantage of this mode.

Most games that support the GBA's multi-boot feature scale back the multiplayer mode that uses a cartridge for each of the systems in the network. Racing games usually limit the number of tracks or only offer one car to race, for example. But this feature allows literally anyone with a Game Boy Advance to join in on some extremely fun multiplayer gaming...and it might even get them to pick up the game to take advantage of the features in the multi-cartridge multiplayer.

The GBA needs light. Lots of it.

One of the biggest technical limitations of the Game Boy Advance has nothing to do with processor power or memory size. The GBA's screen is what's called Reflective LCD. The only way you can see an image on-screen is if the light from the room is bouncing off the reflector under the screen and back at your eyes. The GBA doesn't have an internal light to supply illumination to the screen, so you must play the system in a well-lit area. And that seems more uncommon than Nintendo might have realized, especially with the gamers that want to take advantage of the Game Boy Advance-to-GameCube connectivity feature.



Since day one, third party distributors have been coming up with the definitive light peripheral for the Game Boy Advance. Some lights simply connect to the link cable port for power and hang over the screen, while others are self-contained with their own battery source to provide a larger surface area of illumination. The more light you want, the bulkier the device becomes.

One company, Triton Labs, has gone one step further and offered its own solution: The Afterburner is an internal light device that GBA owners install. But it's not a cake-walk, and anyone looking to performing this surgery will need a soldering iron, a steady hand, and a dust-free room.

The reflective screen is indeed a drag in low-light conditions, but the reason for Nintendo using it is simple:



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE GBA

it's cheaper to produce than a screen with its own internal light, and it doesn't drain the power from the battery nearly as quickly. How else do you think Nintendo's able to squeeze out about 15 hours of playtime from two AA batteries?

The GBA has no superior. Yet.

Ever since the Game Boy hit the market back in 1989, companies such as Sega, Atari, NEC, and SNK have tried to occupy the same shelf as Nintendo's handheld, and failed. Even with the superior hardware of the Game Gear, Lynx, Turbo Express, Nomad, and Neo Geo Pocket Color, these systems just couldn't compete with the inexpensive Game Boy and Game Boy Color systems and games...not to mention the extensive library of titles it offered.

The Game Boy Advance system has been around for more than a year and a half now, and not a single company made the bold move to challenge the GBA to market. It makes the choice absolutely clear if you're looking to get

into the handheld gaming market. People will complain that the lack of competition actually hurts the handheld market...but in actuality the competition comes from within the GBA market. Developers and publishers try to out-do the other games on the market in order to get your gaming dollar. It doesn't always work: crappy licensed games, like Dragon Ball Z, many times end up on the top ten sellers list.

There has been recent talk of Nintendo introducing a new Game Boy Advance system to market for 2003. There is definitely a ring of truth to this, considering that the cost of technology has certainly come down since the GBA system was created. Some rumors go as far as say that Nintendo's going to increase the processor, memory, and the amount of buttons.

But in all honesty, don't expect anything more than a GBA system with a built-in light. Nintendo knows the gamers' complaints, and what they want is to see the games they play. — **Craig Harris** ■





DAN ADAMS EDITOR LETTER ::

10.28.02 - Something has been bugging me lately. Not what seems to be an imminent war with Iraq that I don't agree with. Not the fact that my computer keeps having memory dumps ever since the Windows XP service pack. Not even the fact that my new sofa is stuck on a boat somewhere in the Pacific because of the dockworkers' strike. Yet none of this seems to matter as much as the slew of craptacular games that have managed to find their way onto my desk lately causing me no end of diarrhea and vomiting. How am I supposed to stay sane having to play so many horrible games? At the time that I'm writing this, the last 12 games that have been reviewed on IGNPC average out to a 5.5...

But who knows, maybe this is just me being spoiled by what seemed to be an endless parade of high quality titles earlier this year. But so what? I like being spoiled and hopefully as we get farther into the holiday season, I'll be spoiled once again.

DAN ADAMS

EDITOR INFO ::

Publisher

Jerry Adams

Developer

Julie Adams

Genre

Real-time puzzle fighter

Peripherals

- glasses
- a pair of pantaloons

Extras

- Air conditioning
- White wall tires
- 8-track

OFFICE ABUSE ::

In his free time, Dan enjoys running our office NFL pool. If only he would stop betting on Cincinnati...

MOST WANTED ::

1. Soul Calibur 2
2. A blue whale sandwich
3. World peace
4. Outer peace
5. Inner peace



GAME OF THE MONTH ::

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Then why didn't Steve just let me post this picture instead of having to write an entire review documenting how bad this game *Dino Island* really is. Personally, I'd be embarrassed if I had been part of the project.

WHAT THE EDITORS ARE PLAYING :: RISE OF NATIONS

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT | DEVELOPER: BIG HUGE GAMES
GENRE: REAL-TIME STRATEGY

I seem to play a lot of real-time strategy games. I guess it's "my" genre unofficially. So naturally, I tend to be pretty picky about what I play more than I have to. Well Microsoft has sent along a title that probably hasn't received quite the attention that others like *Age of Mythology* and *WarCraft III* have. Even though the name may not be completely recognizable, *Rise of Nations* may just have what a lot of people have been looking for in the genre.

Coming from Brian Reynolds, one of the giant minds behind *Civilization*, it'll combine a lot of what you love about that classic game with the frantic pace and gameplay of real-time strategy. After getting some time to play the beta, this could potentially be a game that everyone strategy gamer wants to add to their collection.





BACK IN THE ACTION

Are you missing out? Check our guide to this year's PC shooters.

As the song says, it's been a good year for the shooters. At least I think that's what they're saying. The whole damn song might be in Norwegian for all I know. Still, if being forced to listen to it in Dan's car on the way to lunch means I don't have to drive, well, I suppose I can put up with it.

Where was I? Oh, right. The action market this year has been really solid on the PC. We've seen the console developers really make a return to the platform game this year (see last month's Unplugged) and it's interesting to note that, concurrent with this console revival, we're also seeing a revitalization of shooters on the PC. It's not so much the number of them that's impressed us; it's the number of them that are excellent that really surprises us.

So just in case you missed out on one or more of these titles, we thought we'd compile a

concise list of exactly what's available right now and what you can expect to see out by the end of the year. The list is in chronological order (roughly) so some of the first titles are probably real bargains right now.

Nearly all the titles on this list embrace one of two new trends in shooters and this is the first year that we're really starting to see some successful experimentation with making these new ideas work. The first trend is creating a sense of cinema with stories and characters that matter. Last year's best example was probably Max Payne but there have been plenty of titles that are trying to marry the techniques of action films with video games. I call it cinemaction!

The second big trend right now is for simulations of dynamic systems in which the player plays a strategic part. It sounds boring as

BACK IN THE ACTION



hell, doesn't it? How about phrasing it like this: putting the player on the ground in the middle of a war between two forces? Or placing them in the middle of a large city with the total freedom to interact with the people and traffic – oh, and you're kind of a criminal. The freedom of some of these games is broad enough to allow for sneakier or more puzzle-oriented gameplay. Not so boring anymore, is it?

This ersatz electronic renaissance is also bolstered by a few titles that improve upon more predictable lines.

But just because we see them coming doesn't mean we're not happy when they get here. General improvements in game design and graphics have yielded some fantastic shooters this year and they easily make the list alongside the titles that profit by other innovations.

Most of the older titles are real bargains now. If you're a fan of action, there's bound to be something here for you. We're listing them in rough chronological order.

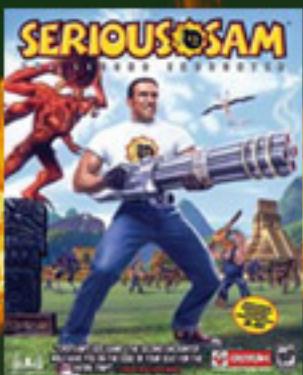


MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: 2015

Medal of Honor is probably the strongest shooter series on the consoles so it was a big shock to us when we found out we'd be getting our very own exclusive PC version. Although the Omaha Beach landing sticks out as the most dramatic moment of the game (and rightly so) the overall package really sells the illusion that you're taking part in *Saving Private Ryan*. It's quickly becoming a cliché in the industry, but few games have done it better than EA's. The cinematic presentation was so good, it even fooled us into thinking that some of the pre-scripted battle sequences were actually happening spontaneously.



SERIOUS SAM THE SECOND ENCOUNTER

Publisher: Take-Two Interactive

Developer: Croteam

From a technical standpoint, this is a twitch fan's dream. The Boys of Croatia have already put together a follow-up to their first game, and it's every bit as good. Eschewing the necessity of story or cinematics, this game puts all its marbles in the action basket keeping the enemies coming fast and in ever-greater numbers. While the other games are all adding things and creating new hybrids, this is the first-person shooter boiled down to its essence. And how sweet it is...



COMMAND & CONQUER RENEGADE

Publisher: EA

Developer: Westwood

Westwood had the guts to actually try something as daunting as it is innovative – the creation of a real battlefield modeled after an RTS but set in a compelling first-person shooter format. As you ran through the levels, you got to see the vehicles and buildings and soldiers of the RTS up close and personal. More amazing, the game functioned like the RTS as well, meaning you consider the strategies of the RTS from a whole new perspective. While the game had some technical problems, it's a fantastic idea and one that we hope other developers take notice of and start to refine.



BACK IN THE ACTION

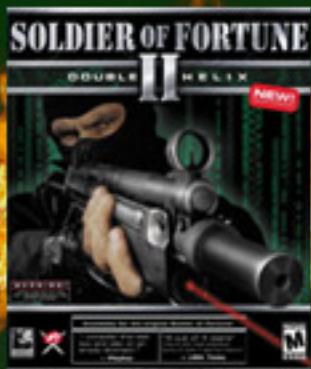


JEDI KNIGHT II: JEDI OUTCAST

Publisher: Lucas Arts

Developer: Raven Software

After a few years of really abysmal *Star Wars* games, LucasArts broke the streak with this one. A lot of the credit has to go to the Raven Software team and their ability to craft compelling first-person shooters. But ironically, the first-person shooter elements of *Jedi Outcast* aren't nearly as enthralling as the third-person light saber action. Picking up the light saber and starting to use our Force powers is unlike anything you've experienced in a game. And the team really convinced you that you were in the *Star Wars* world with an absolutely perfect use of the license. A slightly dark and mature plot helped add even more credibility to the game.



SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II: DOUBLE HELIX

Publisher: Activision

Developer: Raven Software

Raven's got another game on the list, not as revolutionary as *Jedi Knight* but still very fun. The improvements over the previous game are incremental but help emphasize the title's amazing AI and sophisticated tactical options. The enemies in *Soldier of Fortune II* aren't too bad at their jobs and if you're careful, you might even learn a few things from them. As good as the bots are the multiplayer matches are what really held us captive – you've got to respect a developer that puts their own office in as a multiplayer level.



GRAND THEFT AUTO 3

Publisher: Rockstar

Developer: Rockstar

In May we finally got the chance to see what the big deal was. Rockstar's series finally came back to the PC where it was welcomed with open arms. Driving through the city performing missions while negotiating the delicate consequences of your actions was really liberating. The behavior of cops, citizens and cars had us totally convinced. Although it didn't have any multiplayer, ultimately we had enough fun with the single player experience that we didn't really mind not being able to jack each other out of cars. After all, we do enough of that in the general melee in the parking lot as we're leaving for lunch.



MAFIA

Publisher: Gathering of Developers

Developer: Illusion Softworks

After the staggering disappointment of *Hidden and Dangerous*, we were all pretty wary of this one. The concept sounded cool enough: you assume the role of a cab driver who begins to work for the mob. Illusion aimed to combine the experience of the living city of *Grand Theft Auto* with the cinematic style and story of *Max Payne*. In some ways it seems to bridge the gap between the two big innovations in the shooter market.

BACK IN THE ACTION



THE THING

Publisher: Black Label Games

Developer: Computer Softworks

Black Label proves that survival horror is far from dead. Although the genre's received a bit of a boost on the PC lately with titles like *Clive Barker's Undying*, there haven't been many attempts to carry on the legacy begun on the PC with *Alone in the Dark*. This latest game succeeds by relying on the same principles of all horror. Being stuck in a snowbound research station's bad enough; not being able to trust your own friends makes the game a real nail-biter.



UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003

Publisher: Infogrames

Developer: Digital Extremes

One of the giants of multiplayer does it again with *Unreal Tournament 2003*. While the title doesn't fulfill the requirements of *cinemaction!* it does place a new sports-related twist on things. In creating a sports-oriented feel for their game, Digital Extremes has helped to provide more of a context for what is surely one of the slickest looking and smoothest running multiplayer games around.



BATTLEFIELD 1942

Publisher: EA

Developer: DICE

When this game came out two months ago, it stopped work around the office for a solid month. Review deadlines, lunch breaks, and even sales meetings couldn't call us away from this one. This online version of World War II lets players see what real the consequences of multiplayer cooperation are all about. A whole arsenal of planes, tanks, jeeps and ships let you do virtually anything you wanted to do on the field of battle. And since the opponents in multiplayer are all real people, it's every bit as chaotic and surprising as real war.



AMERICA'S ARMY SEPTEMBER

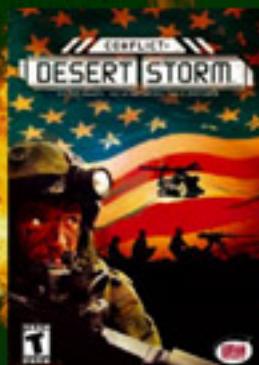
Publisher: US Army

Developer: US Army

Back at E3 we were all surprised to find out that the United States Army was building their very own first-person shooter. And later that summer we were even more impressed that it was so damn good. While it was as much a marketing tool as a game, we found ourselves helpless as we were drawn deep in to the world of Army training. So what if they're reprogramming us with some sort of subliminal software? Cory says it's all good.



BACK IN THE ACTION

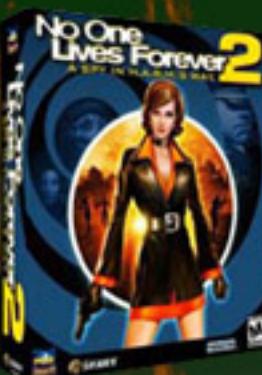


CONFLICT DESERT STORM

Publisher: SCI

Developer: Pivotal Games

SCI seems to have picked up where Westwood left off and brought out another strategy-themed shooter. But this one is more like *Commandos* than *Command & Conquer* as you lead a small squad of specialists through a campaign based on the Gulf War. SCI's also one of the new breed of games that focuses on recent real world scenarios.



NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2

Publisher: Sierra

Developer: Monolith

Until this year, the original *No One Lives Forever* was my absolute favorite FPS. Filled with enough style and humor for an entire year's worth of shooters, it made me hungry for more. Gratefully, Monolith answered our prayers with a thrilling sequel that incorporates all the great gadgets and bizarre situations that we associate with 60s spy kitsch. Plus Cate's hot.



HITMAN 2

Publisher: Eidos

Developer: IO Interactive

If nothing else, IO Interactive deserves serious praise for this sequel purely on the strength of the improvements they made over the original game. The first *Hitman* had a great concept but lousy execution. This time around the concept and execution of the game come together wonderfully. Although the subject matter currently has some unfortunate immediate associations, the freedom to choose several paths through each assassination make it a single player experience worth playing again and again.



COMING SOON - JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE

Publisher: EA

Developer: Gearbox

You bet your ass this one has cinemaction! I mean, being based off a movie certainly helps. The Bond film franchise has been going longer than any other in cinema history so it's a smart move to preserve as much of the spirit of the films in the game. Since this one is being developed by Gearbox, it's almost guaranteed to be a hit. Like *Hitman 2* this game also allows for a tremendous freedom of choice, letting you be the spy you want to be.

BACK IN THE ACTION

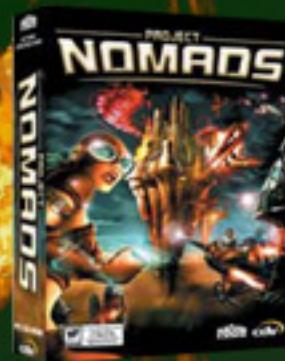


COMING SOON - MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT SPEARHEAD

Publisher: EA

Developer: EA LA

I'm an easy sell on this one. The previous game was the first game on our list and this time around the action moves to the airborne operations before the D-Day landings. You'll also be able to fight it out in the snowy Ardennes during the Battle of the Bulge and fight alongside Soviet forces in their attack on Berlin.



COMING SOON - PROJECT NOMADS

Publisher: CDV

Developer: German Radon labs

This is a quirky game but one with lots of potential. The premise is a bit like a traditional RTS but you'll be playing and controlling everything from a first-person format. In charge of a floating battle island, you're on a quest to rescue your friends from the Nomads. The island functions like a base in an RTS so you'll need to gather resources to build structures for offense and defense. You can run about in 3rd person mode combating your enemies or even take to the skies in a plane and fight it out in the air.



COMING SOON - TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL

Publisher: Ubi Soft

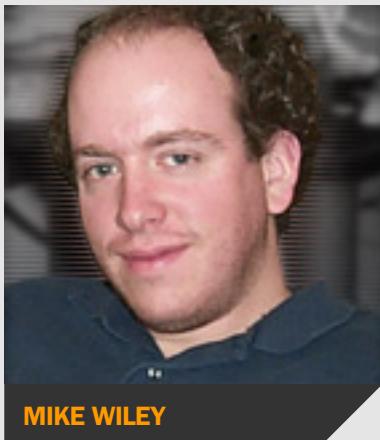
Developer: Ubi Soft Montreal

The big T lends his name to yet another thriller, this one involving a more covert, lone wolf approach than previous Clancy action games. You play as Sam Fisher, an operative for a new branch of the National Security Agency. Although an action game, this one requires you to be stealthy as well, equating secrecy with success. Of course, Sam's the type who can handle it when things get rough...

We'll be sure to keep you up-to-date on all these releases in the coming months.

It's not just our job -- it's our pleasure. ■

– **Steve Butts**



MIKE WILEY

EDITOR INFO ::**FBO**

Mission District, San Francisco

DOB

02.03.71

Country of Origin

North Jersey

Favorite Cuss Word

The "F" one

Poison

Bourbon

OFFICE ABUSE ::

Mike enjoys inviting other IGN editors to his place for Friday night poker. In other words, Mike likes to steal candy from babies.

MOST WANTED ::

1. The last \$2,000 in THPS4
2. Aragon amp reviewed in IGN Gear
3. CES 20003 Previews
4. SiS's RDRAM mobo with 8X AGP
5. 2004 Mazda RX-8

For Gear news, reviews, previews, and more, visit:
<http://gear.ign.com>

MIKE WILEY
EDITOR LETTER ::

11.07.02 - Seems like just yesterday when I was comparing the iPod to the Nomad Jukebox 3. (It was actually two months ago, but I'm so late with Unplugged content that I get confused.) The NJB3 vs. iPod debate made sense at the time, but with Creative's new Nomad Zen you have an even harder choice to make.

You could say that the Zen was launched as a response to the iPod. Creative probably wouldn't admit it, but why else would they go through the trouble of designing an entirely new portable? The company already had a dedicated user base with the NJB3, an undeniably slick device. However, newcomers wanted something more compact and cooler looking. Enter the Zen.

A face-off between the Zen and the iPod is a harder battle. In this issue I pit them against one another in terms of convenience as a portable. Both were designed with size in mind, so they beg comparison. With hope this will help you decide which is right for you, though in reality neither is a dog. Happy reading.


**SCREENSHOT
OF THE MONTH ::**

So you think you know your gear, eh? Well, see if you can identify this upcoming product. This one is pretty obscure, so I will give you a hint about the company: Don't worry about farting if you're playing with them.

WHAT THE EDITOR IS PLAYING WITH ::
LOGITECH Z-680 SPEAKERS

I only hope you read the full review of the Logitech Z-680 multimedia speakers. This rig was part of my Most Wanted list last month, but the NDA prohibited me from saying much about them. However, now that the chains have been lifted, I can say whatever I want. In a nutshell, these are the 5.1 speakers to get if you're in the market. It's not so much that the sound quality aces the others, but rather the rich feature set. With the 680s you not only get more power than you need and impressive sonic accuracy, but also DTS, Dolby Digital, and Pro Logic II decoding. Worried about installation? The 680s have six-channel analog ins, a digital coaxial in, a digital optical in, and an analog stereo in. This means that you could have your PC, PS2, Xbox, and GCN all hooked up simultaneously. Add a wireless remote and you're in gaming heaven.





**THERE ARE HARD
CHOICES IN LIFE.
BUT NOT MANY.**





It was only a couple months ago when I pitted the Nomad Jukebox 3 (NJB3) against the iPod. If you're reading this, then you're an Insider and I don't have to tell you that these little gems are only available to you folks with the good sense to pony up for the goods. At the time the face-off made sense, and in many ways it's still a hard decision. However, with the release of the impressive Nomad Zen, a more interesting comparison is one between the iPod and Creative's new portable. In some ways Creative launched the Zen in response to the iPod. Apple had stepped up and landed squarely on the toes of Creative, who've maintained a large portion of the digital hardware market since the first Nomad hit the shelves, when they launched the iPod. Over the years Creative has kept up a steady stream of solid portables, in both flash and hard drive flavors. Even as competitors crept out of the woodwork – they continue to, of course – Creative stayed slightly ahead of the pack.

Then came iPod, a simple and sexy player that sent everyone into a frenzy. The case for iPod became stronger, and this head-to-head seemed more valuable, when the line was improved and expanded and PC compatibility was added. There were a couple of ways to make your iPod communicate with a PC (XPlay and EphPod), but official support through MusicMatch had Apple's blessing. So here we are.

Keep in mind that the point of this article is to explore the differences between the two models as portables. By that I mean which one will do you right if you plan on taking it on a bus, a plane, sticking it in a pocket, etc. The criteria for this are slightly different than they would be for many other comparisons. For instance, portability was only one aspect in the showdown between the iPod and the NJB3. Obviously, the iPod smoked the chunky NJB3 in that category. The Zen, however, is much more compact, so much so that it really demands comparison with the iPod.

You should also keep in mind that both of these players are extremely impressive. If you've read the full reviews then you know that both earned high marks and would make sound investments. I understand going with either one, but this is my take on the situation. Happy reading.

SIZE



This is about portability, so it only makes sense that size comes first. A picture is worth a thousand words, but I have a 2,000-word count. Get comfortable.

It's important to keep in mind that the iPod is available in three configurations: 5GB, 10GB, and 20GB. To complicate things, they don't get bigger as the capacities increase. In the following chart notice that the 20GB is the thickest, the 10GB is the thinnest, and the 5GB sits in the middle. While the family was expanded, the 5GB model remained the same physically. If you have an original model, or are thinking of buying a used one, then the following dimensions stay true for you.

iPod:

5GB: 4.0" x 2.4" x .78" and 6.5 ounces
 10GB: 4.0" x 2.4" x .72" and 6.5 ounces
 20GB: 4.0" x 2.4" x .84" and 7.2 ounces

Zen:
 20GB: 4.4" x 3.0" x .9" and 9.5 ounces.

Even against the largest (and similarly sized in terms of storage) iPod, the Zen is almost one half-inch longer and more than one half-inch wider. The difference in thickness isn't as dramatic, but you feel it immediately. You also add a good deal of weight. 2.3 ounces isn't much if you're talking about your doughy ass or a cat, but it's a relatively large boost by percentage.

If you can't shell out the dough for the flagship iPod, then consider the Zen against a similarly priced iPod. Granted, you only get one quarter of the drive space, but all of a sudden you have a thinner, lighter portable. I have a hunch that most people buy the 5GB model anyway.

What I'm saying is that the iPod beats the hell out of the Zen in terms of size. Compare the Zen to any size iPod and it's a losing proposition. However, neither of these players is truly small enough to fit comfortably in a shirt pocket, despite Apple's dumbass commercials for the iPod. (If you wear big pants then it might work. Hard drive portables simply demand space. If you're that pressed for space, then go with a flash-based player.)

Winner: iPod



EASE OF USE

Upon initial release the iPod was really stripped down. I realized that Apple wanted to stay on course with an extremely user-friendly device, but they sacrificed too much. (Thanks to the miracle of firmware updates, much was added, but we'll take a look at that in the features section of this article.) However, the straightforward design allowed for a very clean physical interface. The face of the player is adorned with a central scroll wheel – replaced by a touch-sensitive scroll area in the 10GB and 20GB models – surrounded by three playback controls (play/pause, next track/forward scan, and previous track/reverse scan) and a menu button. This scheme is really unbeatable for a portable. You end up using the controls without having to look at the player within seconds. The only beef I had with the first-generation controls is that the original scroll wheel was too easily jarred, so great volume adjustments were a bit too easily affected.

By contrast, the Zen has controls on both sides of the player and a scroll dial for the menu system. This is the third Nomad Jukebox I've used, so I am accustomed to Creative's layout, but it is much more complex than Apple's. Further, there are several controls that feel very similar, so hands-free operation is trickier.

Lastly, Creative made a strange choice with the LCD. Apple's measures 160 x 128 and is immediately legible. Creative's measures a relatively scant 132 x 64 and, despite having razor-sharp text and a strong backlight, is much harder to read than Apple's.

Winner: iPod



SOUND

If you're used to home equipment and have a relatively developed ear, then you know that highly compressed audio has serious limitations. However, for portability and convenience it does a good job. The trick is to find a bitrate that sounds bearable while you're on the go. I use 192kbps. I know people who swear that 128kbps sounds as good as the original; I also know people who consider 320kbps barely passable as music. Also, both of these players come bundled with terrible headphones. (The white earbuds might match your iPod, but c'mon.) If you're serious about your music then you should immediately invest in respectable cans.

The iPod sounds pretty good - not great, but pretty good. The main problem is an underpowered headphone amplifier. The point of a strong amp isn't to obtain ear-splitting listening levels, but rather to achieve loud levels without distorting. The maximum output of 60mW for the iPod means that problems creep in earlier. By contrast, the Zen has a 100mW ceiling, which means you can run it at only 40% or so and get loud, clean audio. And the Zen, like its predecessors, sounds incredible for a portable.

This really wasn't a big surprise to me. Creative's strong suit has always been audio quality. They did, after all, build a company largely around sound cards.



FEATURES



The Zen's big brother is probably the most loaded portable on the market. While the innards had to be slimmed down to fit into the Zen's small case, the influence is obvious. While the iPod now has an EQ, the Zen allows all sorts of audio effects to be activated. You have a whole host of EAX settings from which to choose. You can also simply personalize the player more than you can with the iPod. Creative was thoughtful enough to include both FireWire and USB 1.1 interfaces. The iPod only works with FireWire.

However, the iPod has two important features that make up for its relatively simple nature. Firstly, you can now use iPods with either Mac or PC. The PC connection comes via MusicMatch, a solid piece of software. The Zen is, as of press time, PC only. Mac support might roll out in the future, but for now it's strictly PC.

Lastly, the iPod has a 32MB buffer, compared to the Zen's 16MB. A 16MB will do much to cut down on skips in playback, but the 32MB buffer is much more sensible for a hard drive portable. I was fairly surprised when I saw this spec, as I expected Creative to keep up with Apple. If you plan on using one of these for remotely strenuous activity, the larger buffer will help smooth things out.

Winner: Tie

OVERALL

Add up the individual categories and you'll see that the iPod edges out the Zen. And I think that a qualitative analysis yields the same results. I like the two models almost equally, but if I were to invest in one that I knew I would use on the go, it would be the iPod. The Zen sounds better, which is the biggest draw for me, but the simplicity of operation and extremely compact size make the iPod the better portable.

Happy shopping.

-M. Wiley ■



VS





BRIAN LINDER

EDITOR INFO ::

Starring
Myself

Director
Brian Zoromski

Producer
Mom and Dad

MPAA Rating
PG for Pervasive Procrastination, Action Violence, Sexuality, and Some Scary Moments.

OFFICE ABUSE ::

Brian Linder now shares his office space with a fantail goldfish named Moby (after the techno artist, not the whale).

MOST WANTED ::

1. Harry Potter Book 5
2. LOTR: The Two Towers
3. Cowboy Bebop: The Movie
4. Pirates of the Caribbean
5. An Oscar for Eminem

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<http://filmforce.ign.com>.

BRIAN LINDER
EDITOR LETTER ::

10.29.02 - Awww yeah... It's that time again... Turkey Day is on the way, with Christmas following close behind! The holidays are such a special time! They mean family, friends and mostly importantly: food. Moms everywhere will be cooking up plenty of turkey and dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, cranberry sauce (Mmmmm!) and, inevitably, a thousand different kinds of casseroles. Besides the holiday feasts, the season usually brings some pretty high-profile new flicks and this year is no exception. The November movie release slate includes *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, James Bond in *Die Another Day*, and Disney's *Treasure Planet*. December will see *Star Trek: Nemesis*, *Gangs of New York*, and *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. But we won't be talking much more about all that in this issue. We thought we'd give you a break from the constant stream of previews and have a little fun with our Toons-to-Film fantasy-casting piece. Hope you love it!


SCREENSHOT OF THE MONTH ::

Late actor Richard Harris reprises the role of Albus Dumbledore in his final film, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. In this pic, Dumbledore feeds Fawkes, his pet Phoenix. Upon death, the magical bird bursts into flames, but a newborn Phoenix soon rises from the ash.

WHAT THE EDITORS ARE WATCHING ::
SPACE STATION - IMAX 3D

If you haven't already seen *Space Station 3D*, then you owe it to yourself to stop reading right now, drive to the nearest IMAX, and buy a ticket. *Space Station* is the first-ever 3D space film in IMAX format – if that isn't enough to entice you, then check your pulse. With a six story high screen and 12,500 watts of surround-sound, this 3D flick is the next best thing to blasting off. It's strikingly beautiful, totally immersive, and really entertaining (there are some surprisingly funny moments).

Shot from December 1998 to July 2001, the film chronicles the construction of the International Space Station. Tom Cruise narrates as we follow a group of astronauts and cosmonauts to their new home 220 miles above Earth. The space pioneers share the tensions and triumphs of their greatest challenge: hours of painstaking and dangerous teamwork in the deadly vacuum of space.





WE FANTASIZE ABOUT LIVE-ACTION ADAPTATIONS OF OUR FAVORITE CARTOONS!

Scooby-Doo, The Flintstones, Inspector Gadget, Josie and the Pussycats... These flicks didn't exactly set the world on fire. Cartoons that have made the transition to live-action films have a pretty spotty track record. Some of them have been decent enough (see: *The Flintstones: Viva Rock Vegas*), and some of them have been straight up awful (see: *Rocky and Bullwinkle*). Regardless of Hollywood's inability to make the concept work, we thought it'd be cool to imagine what live-action versions of our favorite classic and '80s toons would look like on the big screen. So, sit back, relax and buckle-up for a ride on the IGN FilmForce Dream Machine...



TOONS TO FILM

The Smurfs

The *Smurfs* were the cartoon hit of the '80s! They're blue with white hats and stand 3 apples high. There are approximately 100 Smurfs with the two most recognizable being Papa Smurf and Smurfette. They live in mushrooms in the middle of a forest and are constantly being chased by the evil Gargamel and his cat Azrael.

The world is ready for a *Smurfs* comeback! I'd like to see a *Smurfs* movie with our little blue friends fully realized through the use of CG animation. It'd be huge! A live-action CG/combo with digitally created Smurfs inserted into real or photo-realistic backgrounds. The plot could have Gargamel (played by Ben Kingsley, naturally) discovering a mysterious scroll that reveals the secret of why the Smurfs don't age. Armed with this knowledge, he puts a plan into motion that will ultimately lead to their extinction. To stop him, Papa and his crew (Smurfette, Brainy, Handy, Grouchy, Jokey, Hefty, etc.) must travel to the ends of the Earth to retrieve ancient Smurfy relics, hidden eons ago, before Gargamel can. Think epic! Of course, the film would culminate in a massive magical showdown between the Smurfs and Gargey, with Papa Smurf making the ultimate sacrifice... but surprise! He's not really dead after all. And they lived happily ever after... or until the sequel.



G.I. Joe

G.I. Joe is the code name for America's daring, highly trained special missions force. Its purpose: To defend human freedom against Cobra, a ruthless terrorist organization determined to rule the world!

Just imagine the casting possibilities for this one. Scarlett... Man! They'd be hard pressed to find a good-looking redhead that could kick butt like Scarlett. Julianne Moore? Given his turn as Gobby in *Spiderman*, I like Willem Dafoe as Cobra Commander. Maybe Ving Rhames could play Destro? Jet Li as Snake Eyes... that'd be cool!

Could it really happen? Who knows. Back in the day, there were a number of scripts commissioned for a live-action *Joe*, but nothing ever came of it. The word is that Lawrence Kasanoff's Threshold Entertainment (the producers of the *Mortal Kombat* flicks) is the current holder of the movie rights. With the current patriotic climate, it makes sense for Hasbro and Threshold to kick this thing into high gear. Yo Joe!

Captain Caveman

Yeah, I'm kind of joking on this one, but it could still be fun. Purists may be upset, but I'd advise against the whole "Cousin It" thing. Cavey would be a simple caveman that's slightly less civilized (and slightly more hairy) than the rest of the prehistoric world that he clumsily defends.



The story could have Captain Caveman going up against a time-traveling baddie from the future who has a plan to destroy Bedrock (maybe the Flintstones and Rubbles would make an appearance), thereby changing the course of history and paving the way for his eventual world domination.

I know it's typecasting but Brendan Fraser comes to mind for the lead – though, if he's smart, he'd never take the part. Charlize Theron could be the scantily clad female lead.

The Jetsons

Meet George Jetson... his boy Elroy... daughter Judy... and Jane, his wife. In the process of writing this story, I heard that Warner Bros. is already planning a live-action adaptation of *The Jetsons*. They're still in the middle of writing the script and no casting has been done, so we can still speculate...



George Jetson? I hate to even suggest it, but... Tim Allen? That might not be excruciatingly bad. Danny DeVito is the obvious choice for Mr. Spacely. I'm fresh out of ideas for Jane or Elroy, but Judy should definitely be Rachel Leigh Cook (as a bleached blonde).

The Jetsons has to be heavy on effects to believably create the world of the 22nd Century – Space Age gadgets and robots abound. The production design should match the retro-futuristic look of the cartoon. It could be really cool.

Thundercats

Eye of Thundera, give me sight beyond sight! Okay, so the chances of a *Thundercats* movie ever happening are pretty slim. From what I've read, I gather that Warner Bros. currently has the movie rights – Rankin-Bass auctioned them off when the show ended.

This is the kind of project that I'd love to see make-up effects artist Rick Baker tackle. I know you're already imagining the possibilities for Cheetara. By Jaga!

A little *Thundercats* trivia for ya: I always thought the guy that voiced Panthro sounded familiar, but I could never place him. Turns out, he's played by Earle Hyman, Bill Cosby's pinochle-playing dad on *The Cosby Show*.

Transformers

I'm talkin' old school *Transformers* with Autobots and Decepticons, not this new crap with the little kids as sidekicks and not Beast Wars! The film could basically follow the plot of the cartoon's pilot episode: With energy resources dwindling, the Autobots set out in their spaceship to find new reserves. But the crew

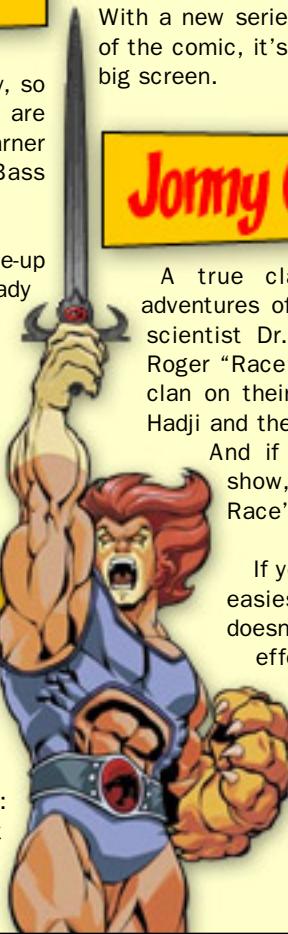
is followed by the evil Decepticons. The 'Cons attack and board the Autobot ship. In the ensuing battle, the ship is damaged and it crash-lands on prehistoric Earth. A few million years later, a volcanic eruption reactivates the ship's computers and a repair program kicks in. The computer repairs one of the Decepticons first, who subsequently fixes up all his evil buddies. The bad guys then set out to raid the Earth's resources but, unbeknownst to them, they accidentally reactivate the Autobots on their way out. The Autobots track down the Decepticons during an attack on an oilrig, and the whole thing culminates in an epic land/air/sea battle involving the Transformers and the U.S. military.



Obviously, CG would be a huge part of realizing this flick. Maybe Square could do it? Last I heard, Chris Lee Productions (the folks that brought you *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*, and *Ecks. vs. Sever*) had the movie rights. There was a lot of talk about the property moving forward a few years back but it hasn't gone anywhere.

With a new series out there and the successful re-launch of the comic, it's "Prime" time for *Transformers* to hit the big screen.

Jonny Quest



A true classic, *Jonny Quest* chronicles the adventures of the young son of widowed government scientist Dr. Benton Quest. Former Secret Agent Roger "Race" Bannon assists and protects the Quest clan on their adventures. Jonny's mysterious friend Hadji and their dog Bandit round out the motley crew.

And if you go by the new incarnation of the show, there's also young Jessica Bannon, Race's daughter.

If you think about it, this one is probably the easiest to bring to the screen. The story doesn't call for any out of the ordinary special effects, and it'd be fairly economical to produce. As cliché as it is, Haley Joel Osment is my pick to play Jonny.

Surprisingly, there hasn't been much talk about a *JQ* live-action flick. I think the audience is there and it could make a really cool franchise.



The Herculoids

On the primitive planet of Quasar, live Zandor, his wife Tara, and their son Dorno. They are joined by futuristic animal pals: Igoo, a "rock ape"; Zok, a laser-shooting "space dragon"; and Tundro, a triceratops-like dino that shoots "energy rocks" from his head. And who could forget Gloop and Gleep, the family's affectionate jelly-like blobs. Together they are... the Herculoids!!!

What fun this could be! But which absurd foe will Zandor and his crew go up against? The Mutoids? The Electrode Men? Will it be the Mole Men? Or how about the dreaded Beaked People!? Regardless of the enemy, you can bet that they're no match for Zandor's slingshot and the family's trusty animal defenders. This concept is ripe!

The original Hanna-Barbera show premiered in 1967 and ran for two years on CBS. It returned briefly in 1981 during *The Space Show*, alongside *Space Ghost* (another great live-action idea) and *Astro and the Space Mutts* (not so great). As far as I know, there are no plans to bring the Herds to the big screen.

The Care Bears

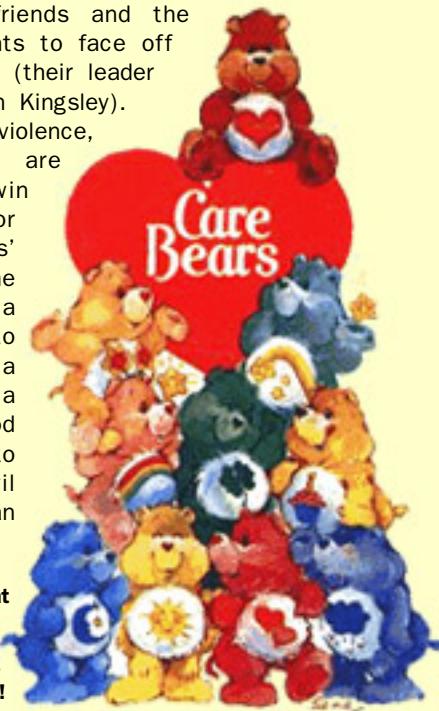
You were afraid I would go there, weren't you? The Bears could be created using a combination of high-tech puppetry and computer-generated effects.

Admittedly, I don't know all that much about Care Bears canon – they were always second to *Shirt Tales* in my book. But stick with me... This works! Care Bear Land (wherever that is) is under siege by an Evil Sorcerer (played by Ben Kingsley). The Bears are beaten and

magically banished to another dimension: our own. In fact, the group comes to rest smack dab in the middle of the 405 (L.A.'s most crowded freeway) during rush hour. After surviving a rough touchdown in the back of a delivery truck, the Bears are understandably culture-shocked – nothing but cell-phone eared drivers racing past them screaming and rudely gesturing at each other (the only one not disturbed by it all is Grumpy Bear). It's the ultimate fish-out-of-water scenario. But almost immediately, something strange starts happening in the jammed up traffic. You see, the Bears aren't able to control their powers in the new environment, and their magical effects have been unintentionally spreading to passersby. Cheer Bear has an unhappy businesswoman laughing so hard she can't drive. Goodluck Bear gives an old man the winning lottery ticket. Tenderheart Bear unwittingly orchestrates a freeway romance. And Funshine Bear causes a group of career-driven suits to park their cars in the middle of traffic for a quick game of touch football. Needless to say, all this madness creates a media frenzy. What's behind these unusual events? Subliminal radio waves? A biological agent? This is a great place for a Geraldo cameo.

The Care Bears try to maintain a low profile, but they eventually befriend a couple of street kids from an East L.A. neighborhood – their temporary home. The Bears' indirect influence has thrown the city into chaos. So much so that it's having an effect on the economy. People are quitting their jobs, selling their sports cars and giving the money to the poor... all manner of goodwill is breaking out everywhere. As a result, Big Business is in trouble. A shadowy group of very powerful men (corporate greed – it's the best gimmick going) set out to discover the cause of this rampant kindness and put stop to it... at all costs. Ultimately, the Bears band together with their new human friends and the neighborhood residents to face off against the bad men (their leader played, again, by Ben Kingsley). After plenty of comic violence, the Care Bears are victorious – their win paving the way for prosperity in the kids' neighborhood. In the end, the Bears find a way to get back to their world. As a gesture of gratitude, a group of neighborhood goes back with them to help kick the Evil Sorcerer's butt. Can you say sequel?

I hope you all enjoyed that as much as I did. Keep watching IGN FilmForce for the latest on toons-to-film and a whole lot more!





fan art ::

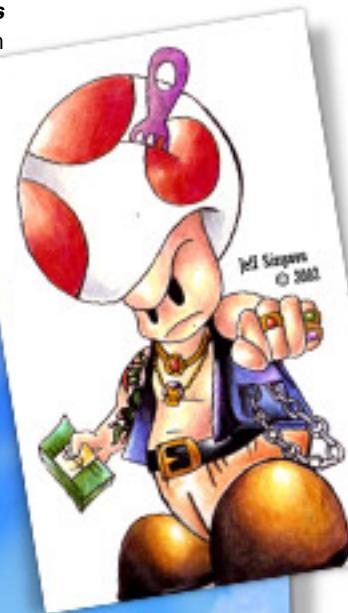
Here at IGN, we receive loads of fan art each month. The art varies from crappy drawings of Matt on his knees investigating a broken zipper of Peer's, to beautifully rendered artwork of Lara Croft naked. While we can't really show either of those files to you, we *can* show you some of the other great work sent in by readers. If you would like to submit your own artwork, head over to <http://insider.ign.com/articles/371/371587p1.html>. (we're still working on a better URL)



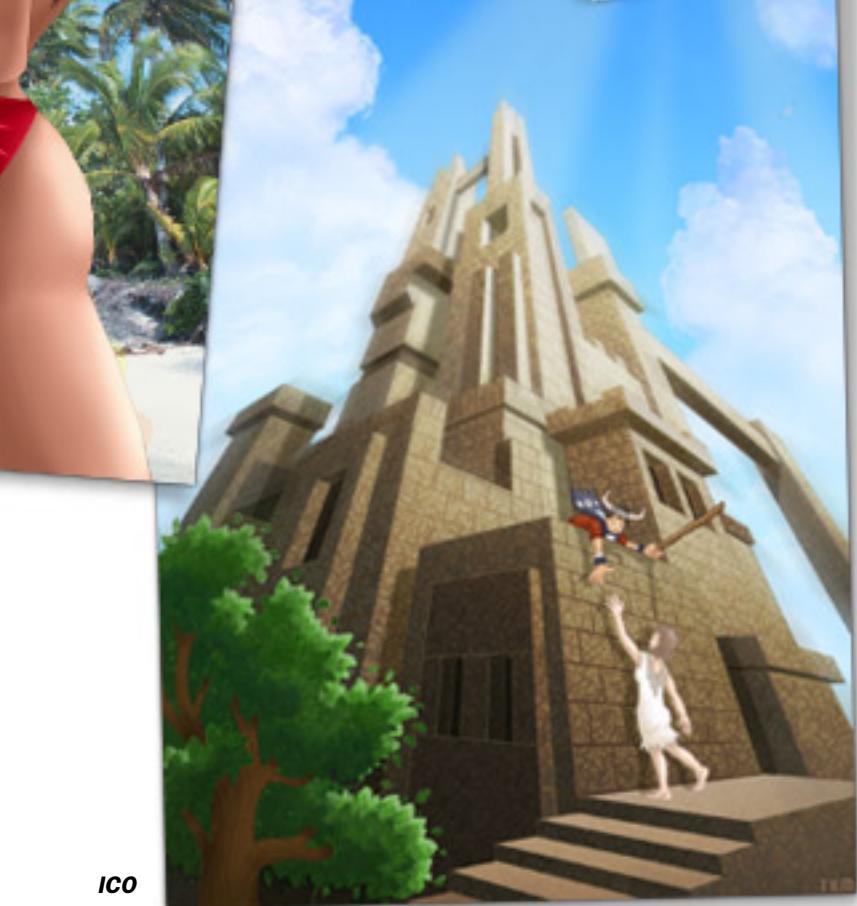
Hitomi
DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball
Eri Gaudiamo

Toad

Super Mario Brothers
Keith Simpson



Rau
The Mark of Kri
Matt "spook" Occhipin.



ICO
Chris Miller

Lenneth**Valkyrie Profile**

Juan Ramirez

**Raziel****Soul Reaver**

Robbie Reilly

**Samus****Metroid Prime**

Alex Satter

**Cloud & Tifa****Final Fantasy VII**

Travis Gordon



parting shot ::

Sometimes a picture needs neither a caption or explanation. It's simply there to be enjoyed and shared.

See you next year....

